Week ending March 5 1955 Every Wednesday Fourpence

JOHN BULL

'REQUIEM FOR A WREN'

The magnificent new novel by

NEVIL SHUTE

GEOFF DYSON, TOUGHEST MAN IN ATHLETICS by Wilfred Greatorex

WILD SEA'S HARVEST

Five days out and you've found no fish. Now you've run us into this storm, skipper...

We're turning back to port (THINKS) He's right. I've lost my touch completely

That's my third trip to show a loss, Doc. Reckon I'm finished...

Rot, Jim. You come with me salmon fishing for a change

I always seem to be so tired, Doc.

H'm. Well, we know there's nothing seriously wrong with you, because I examined you only last week

I'd say **unrelaxed sleep** may be your trouble, Jim. You see, proper sleep – sleep that really **refreshes** you – should be completely relaxed. Try Horlicks every night before you turn in

SO HORLICKS EVERY NIGHT AND GRADUALLY JIM REGAINED HIS OLD SHREWDNESS, HIS OLD RELENTLESS DRIVE... THEN SOME TIME LATER

... and this trip's buttoned up tight, Sam. We'll get a record haul – or!

Aye, we will – if the work you've put in means anything. By gum, skipper, you're back on top now!

Cut the talk, lads, there's work to do!

Aye, skipper knows where to find 'em!

A grand catch, man – and not another trawler in sight

'Pon my word, Jim, it's the catch of the year! Crafty fishing!

Aye, it's a good haul

HORLICKS

EDITORIAL

Fiddling with food

LORD SEMPILL breaks his bread these days with satisfaction. Every time he butters a slice it reminds him that, thanks partly to his efforts, there will be no more agene—the chemical improver—in Britain's flour after the end of this year.

For twenty-five years food scientists have been protesting against the use of agene to mature flour. But their arguments were always countered with official assurances that the chemical was harmless to human beings—though it can give dogs fits.

When Lord Sempill told the House of Lords eighteen months ago that there was evidence that agene can affect human health, Lord Carrington replied for the government that only a single case had been authenticated in thirty years.

THEN suddenly the Minister of Food announced recently that British and Irish millers have agreed to scrap all equipment for treating flour with agene, and importers have agreed not to bring agene-treated flour into the country.

LORD SEMPILL
"We were right about agene"

This is very puzzling to an ordinary man. If agene is harmless, why stop using it now? And, since it is now agreed to ban it from Britain's flour, why was it not banned years ago?

It is an odd business, which can only raise suspicions about other chemicals which are permitted in our food. Lord Sempill says there are about seven hundred of them.

"Since the government admits we were right about agene," he says, "may we not now look for a serious inquiry into the other chemicals in food?"

Lord Sempill's request is strengthened by the government's own Food Standards Committee, which has been investigating colouring matter used in our food.

SUCH well-known colouring agents as caramel, chlorophyll, cochineal and saffron get the committee's approval. So do thirty-five lesser-known food colourings.

There is no case to be made against many chemicals that make food appetizing or easier to keep. But the committee listed thirty-five coal-tar dyes which it said should be banned from food, as they have been proved injurious.

And nobody has yet refuted the attack on some food chemicals made by Dr. Mangus Pyke in the book *The Townsman's Food,* which he published when he retired as Principal Scientific Officer of the Ministry of Food.

Since there are well-founded doubts, let them be either confirmed or allayed by careful scientific inquiry into all chemical additives to food. The twenty-five year delay in banning agene need not set the pace.

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SUDDENLY in all the shops . . . *and now on breakfast tables everywhere* . . . up pops a new cereal packet with a little engine on it called SUGAR PUFF! It's a completely new, completely different CLASS of cereal. They're fluffy wheat puffs with a rich roasted nutty flavour . . . PLUS a crisp, crisp coating of sugar *and* golden honey on top. Twice as crisp! Twice as crunchy! No extra sugar needed! Kiddies—yes, and grown-ups, too—are all CRAZY about Sugar Puffs whether as a cereal . . . for snacks . . . or eaten as sweets. Buy Sugar Puffs today—and give *your* family a treat!

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MARCH 5, 1955 VOL. 97 NUMBER 2540 PHONE: TEMPLE BAR 2468 GRAMS: HEROICALLY, WESTCENT, LONDON

FREE SPEECH

He by-passed a career on his travels

AT twenty-four, when my university course and national service were over, I decided to spend a year or so travelling round the world before looking for a job. I was a waiter in France, a guide in Rome, a farm labourer in Greece and a civil servant in Singapore during what proved to be a three-year journey.

Travel, I was told, would broaden my outlook. It did; and, apparently, it has damned my chances of getting a reasonable job. Prospective employers are not the least bit interested in my "broad outlook." They would much prefer a man who had been single-minded in learning their business. To have travelled is to have been a wastrel.

"You can't expect to come in untrained at your age," I've been told. "I'd have to pay you a man's wages when a boy would be just as much use to me."

When that's not the argument, I'm told that I am out of touch. And some employers are even frightened that I might have the wanderlust and leave them like a gipsy. In Europe I met several cultured tramps —now I understand why.—G. M. V., Colchester, Essex.

Art Round

A TRUE artist will find inspiration anywhere. One who proves the point is our local milkman, Wilfred Ross.

On his round in Peckham he finds ideas for water colours which he sells

Milkman Ross makes a delivery

to the customers. When they ask him "what's new today?" housewives mean in art as often as dairy produce!—MRS. P. F. J., London, S.E.22.

Mr. Ross is a forty-seven year old Scotsman. He is a member of Lewisham Art Society and his ambition is to exhibit at the Royal Academy. His three entries last year were rejected, but he says he is going to keep trying.

Doctors' Dilemma

AS secretary and receptionist to three doctors I should like to give the reader who complains of doctors' pomposity ("Free Speech," February 12), the other side of the situation.

A doctor *cannot* organize his day like a business man because he is on call all round the clock; prescriptions are *not* written in dog-Latin to baffle the patient—they are intended for chemists who understand them, and the Latin phrases and abbreviations save time.

As for the doctor's attitude to his patient, remember that the patient often has nothing to do but feel sorry for himself and dwell on the shortcomings of others.—M. S., Rugby, Warwickshire.

. . . As a country general practitioner I must thank D. McM. for his advice on organization. In future, perhaps, he will give his doctor two days' notice in writing before his child swallows the bath plug or knocks itself unconscious with the smoothing iron.

One day's notice will do before his mother-in-law drinks turpentine instead of cooking sherry or has that old wind trouble which she feels sure is a heart attack—at three in the morning. Prospective mothers, too, might arrange to have their babies between nine-thirty and five.—W. E. S., Co. Tyrone.

Versatile Vehicle

BRITISH Railways say that diesel engines cannot be used on small branch lines because of servicing and maintenance difficulties. Whatever happened to the Ro-Railer—a bus which could run on road or rails? It would overcome all the difficulties as it could be serviced at any commercial vehicle garage.—RONALD F. W. REDMAN, Ratcliffe-on-Soar, Barton, Nottingham.

The Ro-Railer started commercial operations in April, 1932. It travelled by road from the Welcombe Hotel, Stratford on Avon, to Stratford railway station and then went by rail to Blisworth station to link up with main-line train services. It had pneumatic-tyred wheels outside the rail wheels which lifted out of the way when the vehicle was transferred to railway lines. The change-over took three minutes. The Ro-Railer was taken out of service as it was too light to operate railway signal circuits. A similar type of vehicle is now used in the mountains of Bavaria.

Field Rations

SEEING the letter about home-brewed beer ("Free Speech," February 12), reminded me of the days, fifty-odd years ago, when my mother used to brew beer at harvest-time in Suffolk.

She used to fill the big washing copper with water and add a peck of malt and a quarter of a pound of hops to soak overnight. Next day the mixture was boiled and, an hour later, strained through a hessian-lined basket into a huge tub which contained a stone of soft black sugar —called foot sugar. The hot beer was fermented with yeast, left in a cask for a few days, and then we used to take it in gallon jars to my father who was working in the fields.

Mother used to make bread with the yeast she skimmed off the beer after fermentation, and the used malt and hops later made a weak beer for us children to drink.—MRS. C. B. PETCH, Kings Road, Leytonstone.

. . . My father not only brewed the beer for his inn at Marton, Montgomery, but, being a farmer, he grew the barley and made the malt as well.

We left the inn in 1946 when my father died; I didn't realize then what a rare sort of business it was.—J. OSSIP, Haygate Road, Wellington.

Drawing Power

MY hardwareman tells me that since the price of tea has soared there has been an increased demand for the old black teapots—which shows a survival of our grandmothers' conviction that such teapots "draw" better and need less tea.—H. P. L., Strand-on-the-Green, Chiswick.

There is nothing to beat well-glazed brown earthenware teapots, says an expert. They hold the heat well and are easy to clean. Metal teapots are difficult to keep clean and may occasionally affect the tea's flavour.

Clock Watching

A TYPE of traffic light used in Northern Germany seems to me to be more efficient than the usual system.

Suspended over the middle of crossroads, it has sides similar to

The "lights" about to change

clock faces. On each dial there are four sections alternately coloured red and green, and a pointer which revolves slowly indicating which stream of traffic has the right to cross. My picture was taken from a minor road, so the green segments are smaller than those facing vehicles in the major road. — LIONEL A. TEMPLE, Celle, Germany.

London Lights

WHEN I was transferred to my company's head office in London I had to find a house for my wife and family in the suburbs. My company helped in this, and finally I had to choose between three houses in Middlesex, Surrey and Essex.

All were well-served by public transport, the prices were about the same, and the rates were similar in each case. A friend who is secretary of a ratepayers' association suggested how to choose which one to buy.

"Drive round each area after midnight," he said, "and see how much street lighting there is in the neighbourhood. That's a good indication

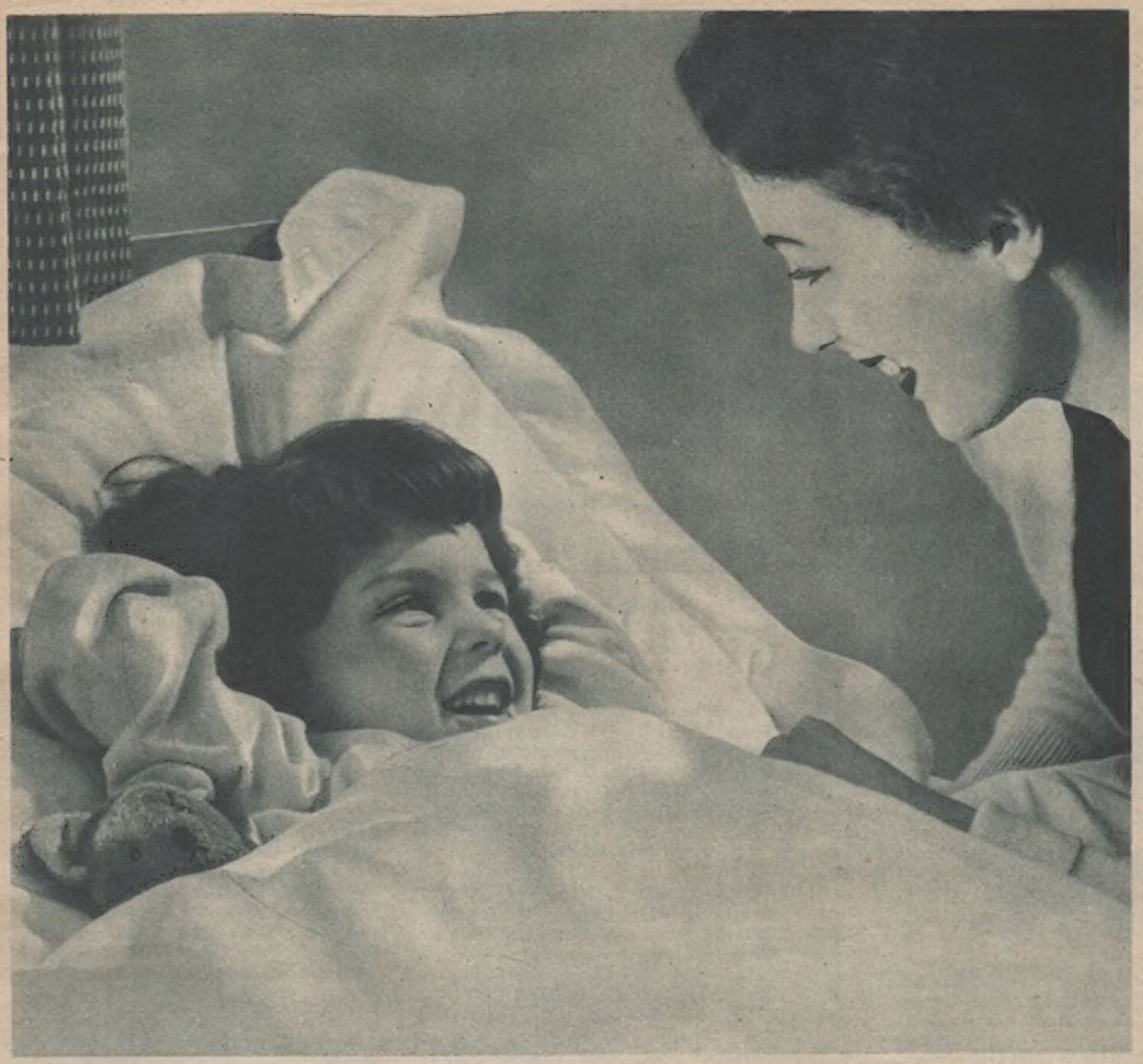
CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

SIR EDMUND HILLARY

the conqueror of Everest begins the story of his mountaineering exploits

Full details on page 15



Keep on taking FACES & PLACES this winter

ILFORD HP3 FILM

Don't put your camera away for the winter—you can go on taking exciting photographs on Ilford HP3, as these examples show.

With this famous high speed film, which fits all popular cameras, your winter FACES AND PLACES, *indoors and out*, will be just as successful as your summer snaps—and just as easy to take.

ILFORD FILMS FOR FACES AND PLACES ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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FREE SPEECH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

how much attention the council pays to its ratepayers."

Three night drives proved his point. One borough had no lighting at all off the main roads, the second switched off eleven out of every dozen lamps in subsidiary roads, and the third kept every alternate street lamp alight all night.

I bought the house in that borough, and my friend's prediction proved correct. I found it was noted for public services better than most in the London area.—J. K. T., Middlesex.

Bubble Trouble

THE husband who allowed the milk to boil over in Gerald Fancett's cover painting (JOHN BULL, February 12), could have avoided all the nagging and mess which his neglect caused.

All he had to do was put a small glass ashtray upside down in the saucepan, and there would have been no froth.—JOHN HARKIN, Wright Street, Renfrew.

China Wear

AFTER buying a dinner or tea service in England, it is very difficult to replace breakages. In Germany I found that shops could easily supply single dishes to bring sets back to full strength.—MRS. E. JEWITT, Bitterne Park, Southampton.

When buying tableware, ensure that the service is an "open stock pattern"—one that can be bought as individual pieces and not only in complete services.

Oliver Twist's Idea?

I VISITED the Norwegian school where the "Oslo Breakfast" was originated ("Free Speech," February 5), and I, too, was impressed.

Just before the war I introduced the scheme to a school in Gloucestershire where it was so successful that plans were made for "Oslo Breakfasts" all over the county. But the war interfered and nothing was done.

The breakfast was easily prepared as it consisted of wholemeal bread, fruit and salad, and it cost, at the time, only about fivepence a head. In less than a month the school's headmistress noticed that the children were much brighter and more energetic in their school activities.—MRS. PEGGY GOODMAN, Corwen, Merioneth.

Scotch Mist

UNTIL I came to live in England I had never seen a chimney swept from the bottom, so the letter about the German sweep who leaps from roof to roof ("Free Speech," February 12) reminded me of home—Scotland.

There, the usual practice is for a man inside the house to shout up the chimney so that his mate on the roof can pick out the one to be swept. Then he drops a weighted brush down the chimney and the man below collects the soot.

Mistakes do happen, though; I remember my neighbour racing out of her house, shouting to the sweep to stop. He had picked the wrong chimney, and her newly decorated room was full of soot.—MRS. IVY ROSS, Whitefriars Crescent, Westcliff-on-Sea.

Highway Code

THOSE car manufacturers who encourage the public to report delivery drivers exceeding 30 m.p.h. ("Free Speech," January 29) could surely find a less odious method of checking car speeds. In a country that already has its fair share of amateur and professional snoopers, their attitude seems particularly sad.

If they cannot trust their drivers they should fit governors to the engines of new cars to ensure that they do not exceed 30 m.p.h.

Carried a stage farther, it might be compulsory for drivers convicted of speeding to have their car engines "governed" to 30 m.p.h.—B. L. CHILD, Crofton Road, Camberwell, London.

Some new cars are already fitted with tachometers which register the maximum speed reached on the delivery run.

War Work

THE story of the building of the Tyne bridge ("Free Speech," January 29) reminded me of a story I heard about the reconstruction of the Menai Straits suspension bridge in North Wales.

An old man who lived near the bridge told me about it. He said the bridge had been almost completely

The Menai Bridge in its war paint

rebuilt at the beginning of the last war without traffic being stopped for one moment and without anyone but local inhabitants knowing of it.—J. WILKINSON, Lancashire.

The roadway and suspension cables of the Menai Bridge were renewed during the war; very few people knew, because there were more important things to think about at the time. A new deck was built beneath the old one, which was then dismantled. Traffic was stopped for a short time while the new roadway was raised into position.

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service

THIS WEEK'S COVER

MOVING house makes a fascinating change from the daily round—until the point of no return is reached, that is. That's when the operation is too far advanced to leave until another day, yet too incomplete for there to be any sign that the end is in view. Outside, the furniture van is only half empty; inside, the new house seems already full. Still, the teapot's been unearthed, and the man-of-the-house can hide from his responsibilities by finding something he missed in last week's paper. As far as his son is concerned, the move is over and done with; disorder is his natural habitat, and his favourite aeroplane has made a safe landing.

Are you on the way to hair failure?

WARNING SIGNS LIKE THESE CAN TELL YOU

This man suffers from dandruff, but not yet seriously enough to feel that his hair is in danger.

A full head of hair, but not a healthy one. Already the hair is coming out on the comb.

Here advanced dandruff has begun to affect the hair, which is now receding at the temples.

Severe dandruff, still unchecked, has been followed by over-activity of the sebaceous glands. The scalp is greasy, the hair is limp and lifeless.

Refusal to take notice of warning signs has led to the bald patch stage. A serious stage, but not necessarily hopeless.

Hair failure is becoming more general—each day the comb is giving a more and more urgent warning.

Persistent neglect has finally caused the hair roots themselves to wither and die. Most of the hair has gone for ever.

Such things as dandruff, falling hair and greasy scalp are more than minor hair disorders, they are nature's way of giving warnings, and can be the starting point from which heavy loss of hair develops. And yet thousands who ignore these small beginnings bitterly accept loss of hair as 'inevitable'. What could they have done about it? By far the best solution to the problem to date is—Silvikrin.

A biochemical treatment for hair

The basic Silvikrin product (Pure Silvikrin) is a unique solution of all the 18 organic compounds (amino-acids) from which your hair is built, and can be massaged into the scalp to supplement the natural supply of these vital amino-acids at the hair root. The Silvikrin treatment has been found of the greatest value in many cases of hair trouble; it is the only *biochemical* specific generally available for improving hair health; and it *offers far the best chance of saving the life of the papilla* (see diagram), the growing point of the hair which *must* be kept healthy if your hair is to be saved from further trouble.

But Pure Silvikrin is only part of the story. Working in their specially equipped laboratories devoted entirely to the study of the hair's needs, the Silvikrin experts have developed a whole range of products, all incorporating a measured proportion of Pure Silvikrin, covering almost all aspects of hair health. Start the Silvikrin treatment immediately and give yourself the best possible chance of perfect hair health.

Drawing based on a photomicrograph clearly showing the hair 'root' which must receive regular nourishment if the hair is to grow.

When you need Silvikrin

FALLING HAIR AND SEVERE DANDRUFF Trouble at the hair root or in the scalp may be due to a shortage of even one of the 18 amino-acids which hair *must* have in order to grow properly. Your best chance of checking falling hair and severe dandruff is to apply Pure Silvikrin, a concentrated solution of all the amino-acids from which hair is built.

GREASY SCALP Excessive activity of the sebaceous gland causes over-oiliness of the scalp which may lead to thinning hair. The remedy is first to shampoo your hair *at least* once a week, and more often if necessary, with a Silvikrin shampoo: second, massage the scalp lightly night and morning with Silvikrin Hair Tonic, a pleasant non-oily lotion which keeps the scalp free from excessive oiliness.

DRY HAIR Dull dry hair and an itchy scalp mean that too little sebum or natural oil is being produced at the hair root. The remedy is to massage the scalp with Silvikrin Hair Dressing (a lotion with oil). Massage will help to stimulate the whole of the scalp—and Silvikrin Hair Dressing will supplement the supply of natural oils.

CLEANLINESS Always keep your hair scrupulously clean. This is important since disorders such as dandruff are far more likely when hair and scalp are dirty or excessively greasy. A Silvikrin shampoo once a week is the best possible way of keeping your hair clean and healthy.

The Silvikrin Range

PURE SILVIKRIN A concentrated solution of the 18 organic substances (amino-acids) from which hair is built. 11/3 for a month's supply.

SILVIKRIN HAIR TONIC An invigorating lotion (without oil) for daily massage, containing a measured proportion of Pure Silvikrin. 2/6 and 4/4½d.

SILVIKRIN HAIR DRESSING A superb daily dressing containing just enough oil to groom your hair smartly and *naturally* all day long: of especial value in checking dandruff. 2/6 and 4/4½d.

SILVIKRIN HAIR CREAM A first rate hair cream, for those who want 'something a little *extra*'. 2/9 a jar.

SILVIKRIN SHAMPOOS Powder 4½d; Liquid—Sachet 6d, Bottle 1/5; Cream 1/5, and 2/3.

All these products contain a measured proportion of Pure Silvikrin, for the sake of your hair's health.

'THE BOOK OF THE HAIR'. Send for this authoritative 36-page book about the growth and care of your hair, enclosing 7½d. in stamps, to Silvikrin Laboratories, County Building, Honeypot Lane, Stanmore, Middlesex.

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The way to hair health

Look!

a new story by PHYLLIS BENTLEY

5 best-selling authors write for you

Phyllis Bentley

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in

WEEKEND MAGAZINE

WONDERFUL NEWS for all JOHN BULL readers! Five famous authors: Phyllis Bentley, John Moore, Audrey Erskine Lindop, Gerald Bullett and Hammond Innes, have each written a new short story to celebrate the *Daily Herald's* twenty-fifth Birthday. **The five stories will be published one a week exclusively in the Daily Herald's "Weekend Magazine," starting this Saturday, March 5.**

Wonderful news indeed! But not really surprising to those who know "Weekend Magazine." Every Saturday this great new "Special" comes out with a magnificent weekend feast of good reading for all the family. Articles, features, reviews, pictures, humour—everything you expect to find in a first-class magazine finds a place in it.

Yet "Weekend Magazine" is only a **part** of the *Daily Herald*. And the *Daily Herald* with its bright, forward-looking make-up, its superb coverage of news, its vigorous comment and with the finest sports section in the country, is a paper you should not be without on **any** day of the week.

There will be a big new demand for the Daily Herald. If you want to read the new stories and enjoy the Herald every day, you must place a regular order with your newsagent NOW!

The first story appears THIS SATURDAY

DAILY HERALD

Mum! where's the Germolene?

FOR WANT OF GERMOLENE SKIN INJURIES CAN EASILY GO WRONG

Read how the mother of a boy like this learned by experience. She writes:

"... My little boy fell and cut his knee and for weeks I tried to heal it and spent shillings on different ointments until I tried yours (Germolene). After a week my son's leg was healed ..."

(Signed) Mrs. D. T., Cheshire

It is known that skin heals more quickly when protected from germs, dirt and water. Germolene contains no water. Its pure medicinal oils sink through the pores and greatly hasten healing. Keep a tin handy.

THE OINTMENT THAT STIMULATES NATURAL HEALING PROCESSES

Germolene

for **ABRASIONS, SPOTS, CUTS, SORE FEET, RASHES and EVERYDAY SKIN AILMENTS**

My friend Liffey

by ***JEAN HEAVEY***

ILLUSTRATED BY ZELINSKI

I miss him too much, he thought. I'll never get another dog. Never

AT HALF PAST SEVEN, Mr. McHugh woke with a start. Opening his eyes, he saw a shaft of sunlight already on the wall opposite. He pushed down the covers impatiently and half rose. Then he remembered about Liffey and felt suddenly hollow and empty. He lowered himself slowly on to his pillow and pulled back the bedclothes. There was no need, he told himself, to get up this morning to let Sally in from the dawn patrol.

The old man lay still, listening, trying to identify the noise that had awakened him. From the kitchen came the snap of the pantry door, the clink of dishes and the rush of a tap. Quite suddenly an aroma of frying bacon permeated the room. The fragrance of it roused Mr. McHugh so that he flung back the covers and got to his feet hastily. For several seconds he had to rest his hand on the bureau to steady himself till the dizziness that always followed a bad night passed.

One by one the familiar array of his special treasures on the bureau came into focus—his best pipe in its box, his wife's picture and a leather-bound Bible. Finally his eyes came to rest reluctantly on the latest addition—a well-worn dog collar. He picked it up slowly and sat down on the edge of the bed. With careful deliberation he slipped the end of the oily collar through the buckle and fastened it securely. Then he stared thoughtfully at the empty circle cradled in his hands.

"You up, Dad?" Sally called from the kitchen.

Mr. McHugh started. "Certainly I'm up," he called back.

"Breakfast's ready."

The old man got to his feet again, placed the collar on the bureau and began to pull on his clothes.

He took his time, partly out of a sense of irritation with himself at having over-slept and partly out of unconscious reluctance to face the changed pattern of his day. Ordinarily he got up after his daughter left with Liffey for the early morning walk. By the time they came back, he had breakfast on and the dog's warm milk ready for him. Here, this morning, Sally had set up a new routine without as much as by your leave.

IN silence, Mr. McHugh made his way to the kitchen and sat down. Sally looked at her father's face anxiously. She noted the pouches under his eyes and the absence of his usual ready smile.

"How did you sleep, Dad?" she asked cheerfully.

The old man shot her an indignant glance.

"How do you think I slept," he demanded, "after what happened?"

"Oh!" Sally murmured.

The sooner he got his breakfast, she thought, the better. Humming busily, she laid a plate of eggs and bacon before her father. With

Sally leaned forward. "I'm off now, Dad," she said. "Take your walks as usual, won't you?" The old man nodded

quick efficiency, she slipped bread into the electric toaster and then poured each of them a cup of tea.

Mr. McHugh, watching her closely, pointed at her plate. "You haven't any eggs," he said testily.

"I thought I'd skip them, Dad. If I'm not to have my morning exercise with Liffey," she added with determined lightness, "I'd better. Seems funny, doesn't it," she went on, trying to put into words what she new her father must be thinking and feeling, "not to have him begging for titbits?"

Mr. McHugh's cup dropped to his saucer. He gripped the edge of the table and leaned forward. Then all the pent-up hurt inside him broke loose. "You killed my best friend last night," he said resentfully, "and now you're making a joke of him."

Sally put her own cup down slowly. "Oh, Dad!" she exclaimed. "How can you say that!"

"That's what you did," Mr. McHugh added stubbornly.

Sally looked at her father. She saw the anger in his face and, beneath it, confusion and hurt. She had often seen one of her pupils look like that—some boy whose manly pride struggled against an emotion he would not admit or did not understand.

"But you agreed, Dad," she said quietly. "The vet phoned and asked you. I heard him."

Mr. McHugh stirred his tea so violently that it spilled into the saucer. "He took me unawares," he muttered. "You both did."

"But the vet explained to you that it was the only thing to do," Sally added. "The arthritis had spread to Liffey's spine, and his legs were giving out."

The old man's jaw set stubbornly. "I could have managed him."

"But, Dad, Liffey was——" Sally began, and bit her lip to keep herself from saying, "Liffey was my dog." Although he had been given to her as a puppy, he had never been her dog, not really. With an airedale's innate contrariness, Liffey had chosen her father for his master. In the years following first her mother's death and later her father's retirement from the Post Office, the two old boys had become boon companions.

Mr. McHugh poured himself another cup of tea. "Your mother never would have had Liffey put to death. She loved that dog."

Sally's cheeks flamed. "Oh, Dad!" she exclaimed, "you're being so unreasonable!"

She got to her feet abruptly and began to straighten up the kitchen with angry, hasty gestures.

Mr. McHugh picked up the morning paper, ready at his elbow. Usually he briefed his daughter on the news as he read, but this morning nothing could be heard in the kitchen but the rattle of dishes.

"I'll take this into the living-room," he announced finally. "Maybe it'll be quieter in there."

WHEN Sally came into the living-room, she found her father seated in his chair. With his hands resting idly on the paper, he sat staring into space. Seeing him like that, brooding and alone, without the familiar figure of Liffey stretched out at his feet, Sally felt suddenly ashamed of herself. She sat down on the edge of the settee opposite him.

"Dad," she said impulsively, "you'll just have to get yourself another dog."

Mr. McHugh sat up straight. "I'll never get another dog!" he exclaimed. "Never! No dog could ever take Liffey's place."

"Oh, I don't mean another airedale, Dad; just a small dog, to take on your walks with you. One like Tessie maybe."

"Tessie?"

"That small dog that belongs to Mrs. Whaley four doors along."

"That one! A lap dog!" Mr. McHugh snorted contemptuously. He glared at Sally "What do you think I am?"

"But, Dad, you'll be so lonely without Liffey."

"I'm never lonely," Mr. McHugh contradicted. "I haven't time to be lonely. I'm too busy."

He picked up the paper and gave it his undivided attention.

Sally sighed with relief. If her father wouldn't have another dog, that meant they could move, then, out of the shabby old house at last. Without a dog, they could get a flat in Manor Court, near the park. It would be wonderful to have everything fresh and new and bright! A reliable oven and drains that weren't clogged half the time!

SHE turned to her father. "I'd better rush now," she said. Then she stepped across the room and began to strip the soiled slip-cover from Liffey's chair, a wing-backed one by the window. "This can go to the laundry today, Dad." She stepped back. "Oh, that looks nice!" she exclaimed. "I'd forgotten how pretty it is."

Mr. McHugh did not look up from his paper, not even when his daughter leaned down to kiss him on the forehead.

"I'm off now, Dad," she announced. "Now you will take your walks as usual today, won't you?"

Mr. McHugh answered with an emphatic nod.

"The laundry's by the door, and the money's on the bookcase. If you have time, will you see why the iron won't heat? There's sandwiches in the kitchen and some soup you can heat. Goodbye for now."

"Goodbye," Mr. McHugh murmured, but he did not look up till he no longer heard Sally's heels clicking down the front steps. Then he stared hostilely across at the unfamiliar-looking chair. Fresh and bright from beneath its coverings, it blurred his mental picture of Liffey, nestled comfortably on the seat with his bewhiskered chin resting on the arm and his old eyes blinking contentedly.

"Clearing him out," Mr. McHugh muttered, "before he's cold."

With a gesture of irritation he tossed the paper to the floor and yawned aloud. Then he yawned again and rubbed his eyes. For a second he glanced down at the inviting length of the settee. Slowly he shook his head in rejection. He had known too many retired postmen nap their lives away, men like Stephens and Gillespie, for instance, who had gone on the pension with him. Both of them had spent the better half of their days dozing on the settee, only to end up, within a year after their retirement, stretched out in their coffins.

He settled himself more comfortably in his chair, folded his hands and closed his eyes. In a few minutes his heavy breathing echoed through the room. After a while, he began to dream that he and Liffey were taking their morning walk. The dog, full of mischief, pranced along with the leather lead in his mouth and tugged his head rebelliously from side to side. In the sun his black saddle glistened like silk. Somewhere behind them, a tram bell clanged repeatedly. Only, as it grew louder, it sounded more and more like the door-bell.

Finally the familiar sound penetrated Mr. McHugh's consciousness and woke him. "Quiet, boy! Quiet——" he began, and stopped. The door-bell shrilled through the house again.

The old man rose from his chair slowly. "All right! All right!" he muttered. He went out to the door. He could hear the laundryman whistling on the step.

"Good morning, Mr. McHugh," the laundryman said when the old man opened the door. "Where's your old pal? Why isn't he kicking up his usual fuss today?"

Mr. McHugh opened the door wide. "Good morning, Ben."

Ben dumped the fresh laundry on the nearest chair. "Gosh!" he exclaimed. "That stuff gets heavier every day."

He ripped the bill from the top bundle. "Seven-and-six this time, Mr. McHugh," he said. "Where's Liffey? Why didn't he bark when I rang the bell?"

Mr. McHugh took the slip in his hand, checked it deliberately and then paid Ben. "Liffey's gone," he said, as he gave him the money. "We had him"—he slipped into the easiest way of telling the news—"we had him put to sleep last night."

"You did?" the laundryman exclaimed. "Well, I'm not surprised. Why, only last week I said to the missus if ever I saw an old dog on his last legs, it was Liffey."

An old dog on his last legs. The words echoed harshly in Mr. McHugh's mind, where

Mr. McHugh stopped and looked at the dog. "Your old enemy's gone, boy," he said. "You'll have to find another"

the image of the young and handsome Liffey of his dream still lingered.

"Yes," the laundryman repeated. "I said to her if ever I saw——"

"There's the stuff to go out," Mr. McHugh interrupted and pointed to the laundry ready by the door.

Ben made no effort to pick it up. "The missus always asks about Liffey on account of our Queenie being an airedale too," he said. He paused expectantly, waiting for the question that did not come.

"We've sold all the pups but one, Mr. McHugh," he rattled on, undaunted by the old man's unusual lack of response, "all but that solemn little fellow I was telling you about, the one I call Sober Sides. The missus says we may have to give him to the old folks' home."

Mr. McHugh tapped his fingers on the door impatiently.

Somewhat abashed, Ben picked up the soiled laundry. "Well, I'd better be on my way now," he announced. "You don't know of anyone who'd like to buy an airedale pup cheap, do you?"

Mr. McHugh shook his head.

"Well, if you hear of anyone that does, you might let me know. I'll shove my address here on the laundry slip for you. And here's a phone number that'll reach me too—it's the fish shop next door."

After scribbling the address and the telephone number on the paper, he handed the slip to Mr. McHugh, looking speculatively at the old man's strained face. "I'd like you to have him, Mr. McHugh, but I don't suppose you'll be getting another dog."

"No," Mr. McHugh said. "I'll never get another."

Ben shrugged his shoulders. "Well, perhaps you're right," he said, misunderstanding the old man's words. "It's like I keep telling the missus, none of us are getting any younger, are we? Well, so long, Mr. McHugh."

Mr. McHugh shut the door hard. Then he crossed the room to his chair and sat down again. He picked up his pipe, filled it, lit it and drew on it irritably.

"None of us are getting any younger," he muttered indignantly. "I suppose he means me. Perhaps he thinks I ought to be put to sleep too?"

He sat smoking, trying not to think about Liffey, until he heard the familiar rat-tat and, glancing out of the window, saw the postman on the other side of the street. He got up and went out, as he always did, to meet the postman at the gate and see if there was anything for him.

Mrs. Denton, the old lady who lived next door and minded everybody's business, had got there before him. She had a letter in her hand. She held it out over the low fence. "It's for you, Mr. McHugh," she said. "I said I'd give it to you, to save the postman's feet a bit."

"It's a criminal offence to interfere with the mail," Mr. McHugh said. He took the letter and stuffed it into his pocket.

"I was only trying to help," Mrs. Denton said. She bridled a little, but curiosity got the better of her and she added, "I heard you had that old dog of yours done away with last night."

Mr. McHugh straightened his shoulders so that he looked taller than five feet ten inches.

"That's right," he said.

"You'll miss him," Mrs. Denton said, with a hint of satisfaction in her voice. "You won't know what to do with your time without him."

Mr. McHugh turned back to the house. "I can put it to good use," he flung over his shoulder, "minding my own business."

He shut the front door behind him quietly and stood still, listening. In a few seconds he heard Mrs. Denton's front door bang shut. "I got her goat that time," he said, with a nod of satisfaction.

Remembering the letter, he pulled it out of his pocket. It was only a bill. He laid it beside the laundry slip on the little table beside the settee. Then he glanced at the clock. "Only half-past-ten," he exclaimed. He stepped into the kitchen to verify the time by the electric clock. "Ten thirty-three."

He picked up the iron and examined it. "Flex's burned out again," he muttered.

He got his tool kit from the cupboard, took out a small screwdriver and a rusty pair of scissors. Next he rummaged through the oddly assorted contents for some insulating tape and finally dumped the box upside-down on the table. Sighing, he sat down and began to rearrange the contents. Subjecting each article to a careful scrutiny, he stacked the old locks, hinges and small coils of wire at one end. Then he glanced at the clock again and slowly began to sort out the stray screws, nuts, tacks and nails. He put them into their proper containers and placed them all at the other end of the box. On top he tucked the small tools, pencils, and tubes of plastic wood and liquid cement.

As he worked slowly and deliberately, he found himself thinking about Mrs. Denton's parting remark. Why wouldn't he know what to do with his time, he concluded finally. He had a routine to follow, hadn't he? Well, he'd follow it, then. That's what he'd do. With an emphatic gesture, he snapped the box shut.

"Eleven o'clock," he announced, almost loud enough for Mrs. Denton to hear, "and time for my morning walk."

From the bedroom he got his dog-walking

clothes, an old raincoat and a worn felt hat. As he let the front door bang shut, he flung a defiant glance at the house next door. That old busybody might as well know that he was on time for his walk, dog or no dog.

Outside he found a bright spring day with a nip in the air that made him button his coat and turn up the collar. He set off at his firm, steady pace for the park.

He was half way along the long path across the park when he saw the man who owned the female boxer coming towards him. The two men always met for a chat and let the dogs off their leads to romp.

Acting on impulse, Mr. McHugh cut across the grass to avoid a meeting this morning. Then, annoyed at himself for having panicked, he headed for home, without his usual stop to get the first edition of the evening paper. When he re-entered the living room, he dumped his coat and hat on the nearest chair and stood for a few seconds, letting the silence of the empty room flow around him. Then he stepped into the kitchen and glanced at the clock.

Only a quarter to twelve. . . .

He sat down, re-examined the iron and began to repair it. As he worked, painstakingly, unconsciously drawing out the little job, the phone rang. Before getting up to answer it, the old man finished tightening a screw. When he picked up the receiver, Sally's voice, a little shrill with excitement, greeted him.

"Hello, hello!" she repeated.

"McHugh speaking."

"Is that you, Dad? Are you all right?"

"Of course I'm all right."

"Did you go out for your walk?"

"Certainly I went."

"Well, I mean—that is, did you mend the iron?"

"I'm working on it now."

"Good," Sally said.

"What did you want?" Mr. McHugh asked bluntly. "Why did you phone?"

"I—why, I wanted to know about the iron," Sally lied.

"Well, it's all right now," the old man assured her, quite aware of her petty deception. "You can put it out of action again as soon as you get home."

Sally laughed aloud. "Oh, Dad! I'll be a little late today. I have to—to go somewhere. Goodbye for now. I'm due on playground duty."

"Goodbye, Sally. I'm a busy man meself."

Back in the kitchen, Mr. McHugh finished the job on the iron. He got his lunch ready and ate some of it, in a half-hearted fashion. Then he washed the dishes and left the kitchen almost as neat as he had found it. In the living-room, he settled himself comfortably in his chair. At a loss for his paper, he found himself glancing again and again at Liffey's chair, so unfamiliar without its faded slip cover and shaggy occupant.

Mr. McHugh sighed deeply. Reluctantly he glanced at the clock on the table beside him. "Only two!" he exclaimed.

Promptly at two-thirty he put on his coat and hat. As he left the house, he banged the door behind him. "On time," he said, loud enough for Mrs. Denton to hear, "for my afternoon walk."

From force of habit, he took his more circuitous afternoon route to the park. He cut down Waverley Avenue, Liffey's favourite street, where his enemy, the Kerry blue, lived. Even before Mr. McHugh saw the Kerry blue, he heard him. By the time he came abreast of him, the dog stood with his front paws on the iron gate. Seeing the old man alone, he cocked his head to one side and barked sharply.

Mr. McHugh paused and looked at the dog. "Your old enemy's gone, boy," he said. "You'll have to find yourself another one."

As he spoke, the Kerry blue's ears stiffened. He sat down snuggly on his haunches, stared

Sally set the young dog down on his feet. He shook himself hard, and looked slowly round. Then he saw Mr. McHugh, and started to walk

at Mr. McHugh and barked twice—staccato barks of indignation. The old man smiled to himself and continued on his way.

When he reached the park, he started on his customary afternoon stint, three times round the outer path. He strode along, the fresh breeze, now warm, tugging at his open coat. Here and there he passed some object that he knew Liffey would have paused to investigate—a few wilting crocuses, bushes with the damp earth spaded up around them, an unwary squirrel and some fragments of biscuit a child had dropped.

The second time round, he caught a glimpse of old Milner and the retired railwayman already on their bench, jawing away and waiting, no doubt, to question him about Liffey. Quite suddenly he turned out of the park and along Park View Road on what was usually his rainy-day walk. He followed the route faithfully, all two miles of it, but found little of his customary pleasure in his favourite pastime.

By the time he got home he felt unusually tired. A glance at the clock told him that he could take forty winks before Sally came in. He stepped over to the settee, sat down and stretched out, pulling a rug over himself. "Maybe Stephens and Gillespie were right," he muttered, and sighed heavily.

Some time later, Sally's signal on the door-bell, three quick rings, awakened him. By the time she opened the door, he had thrown aside the rug and was sitting up.

Making quite a business of lighting his pipe, he greeted her with his usual question, "Well, what's new at the brain works?"

A bag of groceries clutched in her arms, Sally sat down in Liffey's chair.

"Nothing special," she answered. "But—just guess!" she exclaimed, and her eyes were shining.

Mr. McHugh, not yet fully awake, fumbled with a box of matches. "What?" he asked.

"I stopped——" At that moment Sally saw the rug in a rumpled heap at the other end of the settee. The sight of it reminded her of what her father had often said about Stephens and Gillespie. Oh, dear, she thought, he's been napping on the settee most of the day.

A sudden, inexplicable fear dampened her enthusiasm to tell about her interview with the manager of Manor Court.

"Well go on, just guess what?" the old man prompted.

"Why, I—I've got sweetbreads for supper," Sally finished lamely.

"Nothing I like better. Oh—there's the laundry slip and the change."

"What's this address and this phone number, Dad?" Sally asked, and held up the laundry slip.

"Oh, that's Ben's, the laundryman's. He still has one of his pups left. He thought I might hear of someone who wanted one. Take it to school with you. Maybe one of the teachers might like to buy a pup cheap."

Sally glanced at her father quickly. "I'll check this later," she said and stuffed the laundry slip into her pocket.

As she bustled about the kitchen preparing supper, she tried to think only of the sunny, attractive flat she had seen at Manor Court, especially that heavenly yellow-and-grey kitchen with the electric stove. In the back of her mind, though, a nagging worry persisted. What had her father done with his day and how did he really feel without Liffey?

She took pains with the meal, frying the sweetbreads in slices as her father liked them and whipping the potatoes into flaky mounds. When she called Mr. McHugh to the table for supper, he grinned with pleasure at the sight of his plate.

"That looks fit for a king," he said.

"Did you meet the boxer this morning?" Sally asked, trying to piece her father's day together.

"Oh, yes."

"And the Kerry blue?"

Mr. McHugh nodded.

"Was Mr. Milner in the park this afternoon?"

"Certainly, certainly; jawing away."

Sally ate for a few minutes in silence. "Dad, you're not eating much," she said finally.

"I certainly am," Mr. McHugh contradicted. "You heaped my plate; that's all."

He did not finish the piece of pie Sally placed before him either.

"That pie's from the new baker's, Dad," she said. "Don't you like it?"

"Oh, yes, it's grand," the old man commented. "It can't come up to your mother's though. I never tasted a shop pie that could."

Sally laid her fork down, her appetite for her

Continued on page 29

Denti with Neghesti. The natives explained her affection for him by saying that she was his mother who had returned to earth to protect him

A CURE FOR SERPENTS (3) *by Alberto Denti*

Neghesti, the lioness who became my chaperon

I was her great love. She tormented my women guests, chivvied the servants and preened herself in my mirror. She baffled me still more when I found that she read my thoughts

JEMBERIÉ IGZAOU was my valet, general factotum and confidential servant throughout my wanderings as a doctor in Tripolitania. He was an Abyssinian of the Gojjam, short and black, and had certain negroid characteristics but, being a good Abyssinian, he was convinced that he was white and maintained that the whites were red, basing his conclusions on the colour of their ears as seen against the light.

When, after some years I entered the Italian colonial administration, he went with me to Tripoli and when I was assigned to Eritrea he followed me there.

He was an extremely devoted servant. Once in Asmara, I had an attack of septicaemia and for several days was hardly expected to live. Jemberié never left my side. He refused to eat or sleep, and when I was convalescent I hardly recognized him: his face was nothing but eyes, and had taken on a marshy green hue.

It was in Asmara that he told me he was about to be betrothed. His father had been dead for some time. It would therefore be necessary, he said, for me to take the place of his deceased father at the ceremony. He took it as the most natural thing in the world that I should do this; he did not ask it as a favour but merely spoke to me about it.

Of Jemberié's wedding, celebrated in a stuffy little church at the gates of Asmara, I have only a very hazy recollection in which the predominating elements are blinding sunlight, torrid heat and clouds of reddish dust. Fortunately for me, Eleonora, the half-caste wife of an Italian tradesman who was a friend of mine, was also taking part in the proceedings. She was able to act as interpreter and often prompted me in what I had to say.

Having drunk some *tech*, the native beer, I was led by the women into a hut close by, where I found an enormous bundle of clothes piled on the floor. This was the bride. She was parcelled up in about a dozen *shamma*, and the women, singing in trills, lifted her up from the floor and removed her wrappings one after the other until she was dressed only in a long *futa* which fell from her face to her feet, completely concealing her form. On her head, pulled down to the eyes—the only part of her still visible—she had a wide-brimmed straw hat.

Supported by her women friends, the girl knelt down in front of me and I spread my hands in blessing on the crown of her straw hat. We

The banquet given by the prince to mark his recovery. Denti had two attendants to fill his plate; after three hours of feasting, girl singers were brought in to keep the guests awake

At the feast, Denti admired the girl who sang to him. The prince made him a present of her

then formed a procession outside. Preceded by a chanting priest, I walked at a slow pace with a guiding hand on the shoulder of the bride at my side—the two of us under the shade of a parasol held over our heads. All round us, the bridegroom's friends sang and shouted at the tops of their voices.

We passed through a crowded entrance into the semi-darkness of another hut. Suddenly I was amazed to find that there were two brides—absolutely identical, each with the same wide straw hat, the same sack from head to foot. In fact, the second turned out to be Jemberié, adorned in exactly the same way as his betrothed.

I blessed the couple. Jemberié's father-in-law to be, made me a speech and passed to me the authority over his daughter which he had exercised until that day. I embraced him in return. We emerged in procession once more; I was now between the bride and the bridegroom, and we all three carried lighted candles. At the door of the church, priests under great umbrellas led us into the crowded church where the rising clouds of incense made everything indistinct.

The ceremony began. All the priests started to shout at once, reading from their bibles and making a terrific din. The bride's girl friends, by whom I was surrounded, never ceased for one moment their singing and screaming. This continued without pause for an hour or so, and I remember nothing but the noise. But the couple were at last wedded and they symbolized the fact by blowing out the candles which we held in our hands.

After the ceremony, we attended a feast in a great tent erected in the churchyard. As the groom's "father," I was the guest of honour and I sat on a mat between the bridal couple. The air in the tent had reached a pitch of sweltering suffocation. As a preliminary, all kinds of delicacies floating in red pepper sauce were served, and we washed them down with tankards of native beer.

At last the serving girls brought in a whole roast lamb, and this was set ceremoniously before me. Nobody moved; all waited politely. Then the bride's father stuck a finger into one of the lamb's eyes, skewered it out, displayed it for all to see—and placed it in my mouth. The eye, which appeared to be my perquisite, certainly tasted better than the finger which accompanied it. This little ceremony over, we ate solidly for four or five hours.

Gorged, dust-choked and weary from the heat, the hour finally arrived at which the bride and bridegroom could decently retire.

We, the men—the brothers of the bride, the father of the bride and I, the father of everybody—conducted them to their hut. Everyone kissed hands, and the bridegroom shut the door. It was over; I could now go home and have a bath.

Took Lion Cub On My Knee

Although in those days I had no time to occupy myself with medicine, it happened that I was called upon to treat a lioness. One day Eleonora, who had been my guide at Jemberié's wedding, entered my study and announced that in the garden there were three Abyssinians and a cat. The Abyssinians were caravaneers I knew, and the "cat" was a lion cub. They had brought it to me because they knew that I liked animals. Evidently they had encountered a lioness and had killed her. Unfortunately, in getting hold of her cub they had broken one of its legs.

When the caravaneers left, I placed the cub on my knees to see how badly it was hurt. It was a female, not much bigger than a tabby cat. The right thigh bone was broken, and when I tried to bring the ends together, the cub jumped round and bit a piece out of my shirt. With the aid of two sticks, a bandage and a packet of cotton wool, I managed to immobilize the fractured limb in a primitive but solid splint.

The lion cub lay on its back on the grass and looked at me with great, green eyes, and every now and again it yawned, opening a rose-pink mouth full of milk teeth. It was tawny coloured with a white stomach and large paws.

"Shall you keep it?" asked Eleonora.

We began to discuss the question of a name for the new arrival; the cub, as though it thought it should have some say, gave a feeble falsetto squeak and scraped the ground with its paws.

"Do you see how her eyes shine?" asked Eleonora. "Look at her proud expression—like a queen. You must call her 'Neghesti.'" And so the young lioness was named Neghesti which, in Tigrinya, means "Empress."

People who have never had a young lion in the house will be unable to imagine how unsettling it can be. In the first place, someone had to take care of the beast. I sounded Jemberié, but he observed gravely that God had placed lions in the forest and not in men's houses. Finally Omar, my gardener, was appointed dry nurse to the cub. He accepted his charge with enthusiasm, picking up the little beast with a tenderness unsuspected in a man with such great hands, and when the cub licked him with its rough tongue, he was moved almost to tears.

The next afternoon I called on a veterinary colleague, and we discussed housing and feeding arrangements for the cub, who sat combing her whiskers with two great paws. A mixed diet was approved and the amount fixed at six pints of milk and four pounds of donkey meat a day. On this Neghesti grew every day bigger, heavier and more beautiful.

In a month, the leg had healed, but Neghesti did not forget the pain or her doctor. I had only to sit down near her, and immediately she would lie on her back and offer me her paw so that I could feel the thickened bone which was the result of the fracture.

By now she was too big to sleep in a basket in Omar's room, so I had a large cage constructed at the end of the garden. I had to be firm to prevent Omar, who never left her, from

also taking up his residence in the cage. She was very fond of Omar, who devoted his entire time to her.

But I was her great love. When Omar brought my coffee in the morning, Neghesti came with him and sat down at the head of my bed. Keeping her claws carefully sheathed, she caressed my face with her front paws, smoothed my hair and licked me. I was required to return these caresses by fondling her ears and talking to her as one talks to a child, and she replied with deep, short roars.

Even while I was eating, I had to take notice of her. If I seemed to have forgotten her, she nudged my elbow with her head until I turned to talk to her or offered her a little piece of meat or a slice of orange, for which she had a special liking.

She did not hide her ill humour when I had visitors, and she had great difficulty in curbing her feelings with regard to my women guests. The only exceptions were Eleonora and her little girls.

During a luncheon to which I had invited a woman friend, Neghesti, piqued because she had been excluded from the dining-room and furious at the intrusion of the female guest, took the woman's hat into the garden and reduced it to pieces the size of postage-stamps.

Hid Under My Guest's Divan

One summer afternoon, the wife of a colleague called to ask if she might gather some flowers from the garden. I told her to cut as many flowers as she liked, and to come in and take a cup of coffee. I did not think about Neghesti who, unseen by me, had crawled under the divan on which the young woman sat down. I only became aware of the lioness's presence when I saw flowers and coffee cup fall on the carpet and my guest, the colour of chalk, slip senseless to the floor while Neghesti trotted out of the room holding in her mouth the remnants of the stocking which she had removed daintily from the young woman's calf.

Jemberié had disapproved when I adopted Neghesti and, as the cub grew to a robust and lively lioness, he watched her manifestations of affection towards me with distaste and suspicion. There was something about Neghesti that seemed to puzzle him.

One afternoon, while I was reading in the sitting-room, Jemberié called me and led me on tiptoe to the door of my bedroom, signalling me to keep quiet. Neghesti was sitting in front of the long mirror. She bent her head over her shoulder, studied her profile, looked at herself full-face and then, sitting on her haunches with eyes half closed, carefully combed her whiskers.

On another occasion, Omar summoned Jemberié to see what the lioness was doing in my room. She was sitting facing a wall, gazing with a rapt expression at a portrait of my mother which hung beside my bed. She barely turned her head at their approach, and returned to her ecstatic contemplation of the picture.

Priest Removed All Doubts

When he told me of this, Jemberié could no longer keep his thoughts to himself. He confided that he did not believe that Neghesti was a lioness at all; he was sure that she was an earthly form my mother had taken in order to return and protect her son. He decided to consult a Coptic priest about Neghesti, and this learned man removed all shadow of doubt.

Neghesti's affectionate greetings to me in the morning, said the priest, could be no other than manifestations of a mother's joy on her son's awakening—her son was an infant, of course, because sons are always infants to their mothers, even if they have grey hair. It was natural too, he said, that Neghesti should look at herself in the mirror: a great lady would certainly wish to do so. Neither was it surprising that the lioness had remained in ecstasy before the portrait in

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SIR EDMUND HILLARY–the Everest hero – writes his thrilling story

HIGH ADVENTURE

NEXT week JOHN BULL begins a magnificent true story of courage and endeavour. It is *High Adventure*—Sir Edmund Hillary's own story of his mountaineering exploits that culminated in the dramatic conquest of Everest with Sherpa Tenzing in May, 1953.

In 1953 Hillary scaled Everest, was knighted —and married Louise, his boyhood sweetheart

Edmund Hillary first came to grips with Everest in 1951, as a member of the Everest Reconnaissance Expedition. His accounts of this and of the Cho Oyu Expedition the following year are full of exciting incident. He tells of narrow escapes from death in an avalanche and a snowstorm; how he and a companion were swept, astride an air-mattress, into a giant whirlpool. . . .

Round and round we went, he writes. *One fifteen-foot log, travelling with us, was sucked into the evil eye of the pool. When it was released it shot into the air like a cork out of a champagne bottle. After four round trips we were becoming hardened to it. "Let's have a bit of your chocolate, George," I said. . . .*

These thrilling chapters set the scene for the great adventure on Everest itself. Through Hillary's words the whole expedition comes vividly to life—the planning, the triumphs and failures, the comradeship forged in common danger and physical hardship.

We see Charles Evans and Tom Bourdillon returning in a state of collapse after the first gallant but unsuccessful attempt on the summit. . . .

Like masked figures from another world, they moved silently down towards us. A few stiff, jerky paces—then stop—then a few more paces. I climbed up to where they stood waiting with bowed shoulders. From head to foot they were encased in ice. I threw my arms around them and muttered some familiar abuse. Charles Evans thumped me weakly in the ribs and his calm, lilting Welsh voice broke the spell. . . .

We are witness to John Hunt, the expedition leader, giving Hillary final instructions before the attack. . . . *"The main thing, Ed, is to get down safely, but I know you'll get to the top if you possibly can." Then, in a rather uncomfortable Anglo-Saxon way, John handed me an envelope and asked me to leave it on the top. I opened it and found inside a small white crucifix. . . .*

We share, too, the delightful moment of dilemma when Hillary debates with himself what to put in his already overloaded pack. Should it be the highly nutritious but distasteful assault ration or the highly impractical but delicious tin of apricots?

We share, also, Hillary's very real moment of doubt as he lies awake in a desolate camp below the summit. . . .

I could hear the wind roaring menacingly over the inhospitable wastes of the South Col. Crammed immovably between Tenzing and the quivering wall of the tent, I could feel the icy breath from outside penetrating through my sleeping bag, through my down clothing and right into my bones. I felt a terrible sense of fear and loneliness. "What was the sense in it all? A man was a fool to put up with it. And for what?" Shuddering with the cold, I tried to put such unprofitable thoughts aside and drifted into a half-world of noise and cold and sleep. . . .

High Adventure is an enthralling story, and it will, of course, appear in JOHN BULL *before* book publication. It is certain to increase the already heavy demand for JOHN BULL. Make sure of your copy by filling in the coupon on page 30. The first instalment of *High Adventure*, illustrated with many fine colour photographs — some of them never published before—appears . . .

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

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Leonardo and the gift of Heaven

by ***ROBERT S. BRYAN***

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD O. ROSE

She was his pride, his delight, his first-born child. What a shame he could not drink her health in brandy!

AT THE PLACE where the Via Roma broadens out and the sycamore trees edging the promenade spread their branches so far that they almost touch the buildings across the road is the terminal for the bus to Puerto. The traffic to the fishing village at the far end of the island is not heavy and there is little to identify the low, squat building as the bus terminal. Nor can one count too much on the fly-specked schedule posted inside: Tonio, the driver, begins the trip when he feels like it and arrives at Puerto when the ancient Chevrolet will allow. As a passenger one learns patience.

Leonardo, who knew the antic disposition of the Puerto bus, had left the hospital with Rosario soon after lunch, first changing into his comfortable rope-soled sandals and tucking under his arm the shiny black leather shoes which he had carefully wrapped in newspaper. Now that the christening was over and the child had been properly named, one could dispense with such formalities as leather shoes. All that remained now was the journey home to Puerto where Jaime would be waiting for them.

As they walked—the pavements punishingly hard on feet used to the soft, yielding soil of the country—Leonardo thought of the long, straight furrows that he ploughed each day on the farm of Don Pedro.

For a year he had worked with the single-bladed plough and had received the wages due for such labour. A month before, when he had told Don Pedro of the coming arrival of the child, he had asked to be put to work with a large double-bladed plough pulled by two burros. Although the pay was almost double, the labourers who handled the large ploughs complained that their arms ached and that it was not worth the extra money. But Leonardo noticed that they did not give the work up. Don Pedro had told Leonardo that he would see what could be arranged.

Rosario walked proudly, the diminutive bundle nestled in the crook of her arm. Every so often

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Leonardo gazed sadly at the bottles. Once again he fingered his money. But all he had was the price of their bus fares home

Showman Palmer attacks on ice

by HARRY LOFTUS

To capture the audience, he stages a lavish spectacle like a military operation. "Surprise is important," he says. Even the Russian Army fell back at his onslaught

AT THE ALCAZAR THEATRE, Madrid, a gala ice show arranged for General Franco was over, and the producer, Gerald Palmer, was showing the Spanish president the ice rink, the first he had seen.

Noting Franco's keen interest, Palmer suggested that he should try to skate, but was curtly rebuffed. Instead, an elegantly uniformed army captain was ordered to go on the ice. Saluting smartly, the officer put on skates, stepped on the rink—and sprawled on his back.

"There was a horrified silence and Franco's face was stony," says Palmer. "Then he burst out laughing and said: 'I was wise to refuse your invitation, but you have made me laugh.' "

A broad-shouldered, erect showman of fifty-six, Gerald Palmer has since the war won a reputation as a top ice show producer. In 1953 he had shows running in Germany, Italy, Spain and South Africa as well as in Britain.

"Palmer," says a business associate, "has a knack of skating easily over difficulties that would land most other producers in the bankruptcy court or in hospital with heart trouble." Palmer himself remarks that his fifty-three ice productions since 1945 would have bored him if they had been trouble-free.

After an ice production for Tom Arnold had ended its run at the Berlin Sportpalast, Palmer sent the skaters to Essen by air, arranging for the costumes and ice-making plant to follow by road through the Soviet Zone. He was at the airport, ready to fly to London, when he learned that the Russians had impounded the lorries.

Without waiting for an interpreter, he stormed off to negotiate with the Russians in sign-language. After ten days he got the lorries released by paying a £1,000 fine—and promising to invite the Russian officials to his next Berlin ice show.

"He came back from Germany delighted that he had interested the Russians in ice shows," says Fred Gratton, his press agent, "and showing a newly acquired taste for vodka."

He tried for four months to persuade Cecilia Colledge to become a professional skater, before she agreed to appear in the first of his ice shows. To get Barbara Ann Scott to star in *Rose Marie On Ice* he had to make three trips to the United States and to Canada, and negotiations lasted two years.

But Jeanette Altwegg refused all his offers, telling him she preferred marriage to professional skating. "Jeanette is the only world champion skater to have turned me down, and I wanted to star her in a show more than any other artist," he admits.

Palmer and his wife, Alexis, live at their country home near Reading. Mrs. Palmer, who was a professional concert singer before her marriage, became tired of her husband's preoccupation with ice shows, and now shares the worries by advising the artists on singing technique.

After six war years as a Royal Army Service Corps lieutenant-colonel, during which he landed in Normandy on D-Day, Gerald Palmer turned to producing ice shows for Tom Arnold when the impresario confessed that he was looking for a new form of mass entertainment.

Freezing Plant Was In Store

"People want colourful, spectacular and restful shows as a relief from austerity," Palmer argued. Reminding Arnold of his experiments with ice revues before the war, he suggested an ice show in a London theatre.

Agreeing that he was right, Tom Arnold told him he would take over the Stoll Theatre, and gave him a free hand to produce an ice revue there. Plans were well advanced and many of the skaters under contract when Palmer found that ice-making plant was not then obtainable in this country.

"Luckily, I heard that an ice show had been touring Australia at the outbreak of war, and traced the refrigerating plant, where it had been left in storage. I had it shipped to London in time for the opening night."

One evening some weeks later, he was watching the show from the back of the stalls when he noticed the skaters floundering and sending up sprays of water from their skates. Rushing backstage, he was met by the refrigeration engineer who reported that a power cut had slowed down the plant. The ice rink was turning into a pool of water.

Palmer telephoned to the electricity board and threatened to advise his audience of two thousand to complain to the board about power cuts. After an interval of thirty minutes, full power was restored and the show went on.

Impressed by the box office success of *Ice Revue*, Tom Arnold asked Palmer to plan the production of skating revues to tour towns and cities in Europe and Scandinavia.

Pumped Hot Air Into Big Top

Palmer staged an ice show for German audiences by hiring a circus tent in Hamburg. But the outdoor temperature was below freezing-point and patrons protested that the ice rink made them feel even colder.

"From an army dump of surplus equipment, I acquired two mobile bath units. With a few minor alterations, I got them pumping hot air into the big top," he says. "But the effect was largely psychological."

In Spain, where ice skating was a novelty, Palmer found that he was expected to prepare an ice revue in a bull-ring under a blazing sun and with the temperature in the nineties. He got over the difficulty by telling his engineers

In their dressing-room, Palmer jokes with the *Aladdin On Ice* chorus girls. One of the company says: "You feel that he'd be happier drilling his skaters by numbers, like a squad of soldiers"

Palmer watches Beatrice Livesey, choreographer for *Aladdin On Ice*, instruct the Laundrettes. Since 1945, he has produced fifty-three ice shows

to freeze water in the arena at sundown, covering the ice with straw mats to insulate it from the warm evening air, and by starting performances at eleven o'clock at night.

He says that people in the front seats were too enthralled to notice that they were often showered with water as the skaters slid across the melting ice.

Palmer claims that his army training in engineering helps him to stage spectacular shows such as *Aladdin On Ice* at the Empire Pool, Wembley, and admits that he plans new productions on the lines of a military operation.

"Though Gerald has a wide knowledge of skating technique, one often feels that he would be happier drilling his skaters by numbers like a squad of soldiers," says one member of the *Aladdin* company.

Sometimes, when he fails to get what he wants in organizing a show, he calls his staff together and plans a "sortie," which he leads.

When he arrived in Johannesburg in 1952 to produce an ice show at the Olympia Stadium, he found the lighting unsuitable for his production. He sent his assistants in cars to search the city for floodlights and ordered them to phone news of their progress to him at regular intervals.

Impatient with their lack of success, Palmer ordered a taxi-driver to take him to the nearest racecourse. It was equipped with floodlighting, but a bewildered official protested that it was needed for a race meeting when Palmer asked if he could borrow the lamps.

Promising that the lighting would be restored in time for the meeting, Palmer was directing dismantling operations before the racecourse official had drawn up a hire agreement.

"The surprise element is just as important in show business," says Palmer, "as in a battle."

Gerald Palmer, who comes from a Bedfordshire family with many army associations, was educated at Bedford College and Sandhurst Military Academy for an army career, and served in the first World War in the Queen's Bays. His parents expected him to take a regular army commission, but after the Armistice, he says, he thought show business would be more adventurous than soldiering.

Though his knowledge of the theatre was limited to school dramatic society productions and camp concerts, he asked Albert de Courville, the impresario, for a job and was appointed de Courville's personal assistant.

Lit Red Fire On Theatre Roof

His audacity and unorthodox publicity methods while managing touring revues for de Courville soon earned Palmer a reputation among theatre people.

On the opening night of *Smoke Rings* in a New Brighton theatre one broiling Bank Holiday Monday, Palmer stood at the back of the stalls and counted fewer than thirty people in the audience.

Crossing the river to Liverpool next morning, he toured the city buying quantities of "red fire" fireworks which burn with a vivid red glow and are used at sea as distress signals. The same evening he climbed to the theatre roof when it was dusk and lit the fireworks. Then he telephoned Liverpool newspaper offices and tipped them off, under an assumed name, that the theatre was ablaze.

"It must have been an impressive sight from across the Mersey. Five fire engines were rushed to the theatre," he says.

Subsequently, he was fined for creating a public disturbance.

One publicity stunt that misfired for him was the gala first night of *Dick Whittington On Ice* at the Empire Pool, Wembley, in 1950 when the Lord Mayor of London had been invited to lead the opening ceremony.

Kept busy by production problems backstage until a few minutes before the Lord Mayor's arrival, Palmer rushed round to the main entrance only to be barred by a commissionaire who demanded his admission card.

Ignoring his explanations that he was the producer and had to receive the distinguished guests, the man brushed him aside, saying: "You will be telling me that you're the Lord Mayor next."

Palmer had to return to the stage door, telephone the house manager and explain the difficulty before the commissionaire would admit him.

"Since then," says Palmer, "I've insisted on having a special pass issued to me by managements for which I am working. THE END

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

THE KILLING SANDS

by ***DUDLEY HOYS***

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES WOOD

She had spurred the man she loved into risking his life. And this was her punishment: to stand by, helpless, while he vanished from sight

I FIND IT HARD these days to glance at Grizewell Bay without shuddering. From late spring to early autumn I see it once a week, when I come down from my hill farm to play an evening game of chess with Tom Faulkner. On occasion, when he gets a sudden call to visit a patient, I have to wait for him. Then, inevitably, I find myself staring at the view and remembering what happened that August night.

Tom and I were boys together. He was a clever lad, winning scholarships, and eventually taking a medical partnership in the south. There he met his wife-to-be, and seemed happily settled for long years, until she died. After that, his craving for his own country asserted itself. The old doctor at Grizewell was retiring, and Tom got the practice. He brought with him a daughter of twenty-one, and she must have turned every young man's head for miles. Her eyes were wonderfully clear, and there was a thistledown gracefulness about her. A hint of arrogance, I imagined, had been inherited from her mother. It might have irked folks a little if she had been less attractive.

The first time I met her, Tom had been routed out to deal with an urgent case. She apologized for his absence, and said that he expected to be back by nine. "This," she went on, beckoning to a tall loose-limbed fellow, "is Alan Steele. We're going to be engaged."

I knew him by sight. His father farmed Crailholme, on the opposite side of the bay. I shook hands, and congratulated the pair of them. He struck me as a decent type, intelligent, a trifle shy, younger in his mind than the girl, and wedded to the land.

We chatted, and then they took themselves off and I browsed over the paper for a while. The sun was going down over the sea, and with the tide out, the wide sands of the estuary had a platinum glitter. Six miles it measured, straight across from headland to headland, and ruled more or less down the centre by the shallow, meandering bed of the Crail. From the shore itself to Tom's house on the outskirts of the town was another mile. So, as the crow flies, Crailholme was a mere seven miles away. But by road, twisting and turning around the inlets, it was the best part of forty.

I wondered idly if Alan ever used the oversands crossing at low tide. Half a century ago it was a regular route, though those who took it had to be careful, on account of the sinking sands on the north bank of the Crail. They could be avoided by keeping on a strict line between the landmarks of Crailholme on the south shore, and the sharp, rocky noddle of Scar Edge on the north. As I was conjuring up a picture of that damp, glimmering flatness dotted by farm carts, pony traps, and the like, I heard voices from the garden.

It was Jill and Alan, and they seemed to be on the verge of a quarrel. She was saying with a note of coolness: "That's all very well. But if it goes on happening, I can't see myself accepting it. Why should I?"

"But, Jill, don't you see? Farming's different from any other job. Completely different."

"But if you make a promise, I expect you to keep it."

He gave a distinct, anxious sigh. He said: "You know what the weather's been like this year. We've simply got to snatch at every chance of a few dry hours. We gathered for clipping yesterday, and today's been ideal. But the glass is falling. If we'd left those sheep till tomorrow, the odds are it would be raining."

"Seems to me you've raked up a cast-iron excuse. Whenever you're late, you'll give a farming reason. And I shall have to take it meekly. Is that the idea?"

"No, it isn't the idea at all." His voice was pleading. "If you'd been brought up in the country, you'd understand. Handling animals, and hay, and so on, you can't have set hours."

She made an impatient sound. "If you really wanted to see me, you'd manage somehow."

I wanted to call out: "You charming, silly child! You should thank God he's a conscientious young farmer and not a clock-watcher!"

GIVING a few warning coughs, I strolled into the garden. At least my presence would calm things down for the time being. They pretended, abruptly, to be admiring the view. I said: "More rain in the offing."

Alan nodded.

"A devil of a year it's been. Can't afford to lose half an hour of fine weather." I saw her fine eyes flicker and went on: "When I was a young

man I once lost ten acres of hay because I went to a local show instead of grabbing my chance that day."

Her mouth had a rebellious curve. "Farming must be an awful tie."

"Babies are a tie, young lady, but I never knew a proper mother mind that."

She burst out laughing, and Alan smiled gratefully at me. I went on to ask him if he ever used the oversands crossing to get here, and he said:

"Often, when tide's out. Reckon I can be over from Crailholme in thirty-five minutes on a push-bike."

"It takes a solid hour by car," said Jill. "No wonder this coast was so isolated in the old days."

She stood there, her head poised magnificently, surveying that great sweep glimmering between the darkening headlands, and I saw him watching her with utter adoration. I fully believed they were in love with each other. And yet I was afraid that they were both going to be hurt.

A poor June slid into a worse July. I played my weekly game of chess with Tom, and saw quite a bit of the young couple. Once or twice I noticed Jill's taut, inward expression, and Alan hanging around with the manner of a bewildered spaniel. Knowing Tom so well, I asked his opinion.

His head gave a dubious, worried wag. "Don't know what to say. She's got a will of her own. So has he. And I sympathize with both of them. The trouble about this bickering is that it leaves its mark."

"If you ask me, he's in the right. In farming, a man's job's got to come first. You know that."

He said: "Don't forget, she's in love. It cuts both ways. Something she'd laugh at, if they were merely friends, now seems quite serious."

I smiled. "Ay, that's it. A girl says: 'Do I matter to you more than everything else in the world?' and she's shocked if the man says: 'Yes, but I've got to get these cows milked.'"

"Well, not if she's country bred. But don't forget Jill isn't." He moved his knight. "Anyway, I can't interfere."

A MONTH later, after a day that had blended warm sunshine and a brisk breeze, I went along for my game of chess. I was feeling pleased with life. We had got in the last of our hay, and that was a burden off my mind.

Jill opened the door. She smiled and said: "I'm awfully sorry. Father won't be back for a while. But if you don't mind waiting——"

"That's all right. I can amuse myself."

She took me into that back room with the view of the bay. Seaward, the sky was changing. A thin, smoky band had crept into the waning blueness. A stranger to these parts might have thought nothing of it. But that harmless streak of light cloud would drop lower as it approached the coast, and lower still on meeting the upthrust barrier of the fells inland. More cloud would tack on behind it, gradually descending, masking the bay, and ending up in a drenching night.

Jill said: "Would you mind terribly if you're left alone in the house for a little while? And taking any phone messages? You see, Alan's picking me up in half an hour, and if Father isn't back by then. . . ." She glanced at the clock. It was a quarter to eight.

"Considering I'm almost one of the family. . . ."

She nodded and laughed. "Thanks. There's a picture on I'm just mad about. If Alan's a minute late, I shall be furious with him."

Out in the hall the phone tinkled, and she went to answer it. If only I could have overheard the conversation that followed, instead

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As she darted forward, I seized her by the collar. "You've got to be brave," I said. "He knows he hasn't much chance"

Geoff Dyson – relentless maker of champions

by WILFRED GREATOREX

With ruthless, parade ground methods, he creates world-class athletes. His aim: gold medals for Britain. His demand: all-out effort—"and anything less makes him livid"

Dyson and long-jumper Shirley Cawley take a break during training. When Shirley joined the Dyson team, she "was terrified of him"

JOHN SAVIDGE, BRITAIN'S giant shot-put champion, was off form. He had already made sure of winning his event at the Kinnaird Trophy Meeting last summer with a put well below his best, and still had four more puts to come when he pulled on his track suit in exasperation and told the judge that he was through for the day.

Savidge's coach, a thickset, boyish-faced husky named Geoff Dyson, exploded when he heard the news. "What the hell is he up to?" he said, and promptly set off in search of the champion. He found him in the dressing-room, already showered and changed. Dyson looked up at the six feet seven inches, seventeen-stone Savidge and angrily ordered him to return to the field and apologize to the judge.

"Some people who can't exactly be called Geoff's friends hoped that Savidge would refuse," recalls an official. "But he just shrugged and did as he was told."

At forty, Geoffrey Harry George Dyson is a blunt and bouncy ex-regular soldier who uses parade ground methods to get British athletes to move themselves, or objects such as the shot, discus and javelin, farther, higher or faster than their opponents can. He has been criticized as much for liking the sound of his own sergeant-major voice as for his ruthless insistence on total effort, in practice and competition, from his Olympic-class but nevertheless strictly unpaid athletes. "He carries on," says an acquaintance, "as if he'd bought their services."

Despite his critics, Dyson is rated by many experts in Britain and abroad—he has been invited to run athletes' courses in India and Yugoslavia this year—as the most knowledgeable athletics coach in the world.

For The Cinderella Events

Since his appointment as Britain's chief national coach in 1947, he has stomped the country demanding more and better facilities for athletes, instructed coaches (about 1,500 have passed the Amateur Athletic Association examinations in that time), and spread the idea that Britain, to have a chance in Olympics and other international meetings, should develop athletes for what he calls the Cinderella events—the pole vault, long jump, high jump, hurdles, steeplechase, shot put, discus and javelin.

"He's a realist," says one A.A.A. official, "who is stripping the conservatism and cotton-wool padding from the sport in this country. For years, we were the laughing stock of the world in the field events, but not any more."

Dyson first applied his Cinderella theory one September afternoon in 1946. At that time a lecturer at Loughborough College, he saw a raw and inexperienced seventeen-year-old Welsh student break a college middle-distance record. Impressed, Dyson followed him to the dressing-room. "I'd never even seen a proper athletics meeting at that time," recalls John Disley. "He told me that with coaching I would make a top-class steeplechaser." By 1950, Disley was an international, and is today British champion and the world's best two-mile steeplechaser. "I was looking for athletes with the guts to compete in the tougher events," says Dyson. "It didn't seem to occur to a lot of people that we could get a gold medal for a shot put as well as for running the mile. We had to bung up the holes through which the gold medals were slipping."

Today, Dyson has a top-flight team of hand-picked athletes concentrating on the neglected events. In addition to John Disley, he coaches Geoff Elliott, British pole vault champion and decathlon hope; Shirley Cawley, a long-jumper; Roger Dunkley; and David Westerhout, a javelin thrower.

Snow Obscured Water Jump

"For an athlete," says an A.A.A. official, "joining Dyson is like signing on for a Guards regiment and doing four years' hard labour at the same time. He expects a hundred per cent effort, and anything less makes him livid." Dyson turned down one promising athlete not long ago because he was not prepared to keep in full training during the winter—the season, according to Dyson, when athletes are made.

One Saturday morning last January, he insisted that Disley should run the steeplechase course despite a thick covering of snow which almost completely obscured the water jump. When Shirley Cawley indicated by bouncing a pickaxe on the frozen surface that the sandpit was unsafe for long jump practice, Dyson bawled: "You should have come earlier and dug it up."

Friends sometimes suggest to Dyson that he should temper his approach to allow for human sensibilities, but he shows no inclination to alter his methods. "I was terrified of him at first," says Shirley Cawley. "But he has a way of bringing the best out of us, especially in international events."

During the European Championships at Berne last year, Dyson was told by a fellow-coach, Franz Stampfl, that Savidge was having difficulty in the shot put. He had no-putted twice and had only one put left to qualify for the finals. As there had been complaints about the Russians' high-powered coaching during the meeting, Dyson was advised by officials to go easy.

"He pushed his way through the crowd," says a witness, "caught John's eye and told him to steady up. He indicated that he was

Mrs. Dyson—formerly Maureen Gardner, Olympic hurdler—tests one of her husband's devices. He uses it in lectures on the science of movement

Roger Dunkley, a miler persuaded by Dyson to try steeplechasing, trains on a cold, wet morning . . . Athletes, says Dyson, are made in the winter

going to stay to watch that crucial third put. Savidge qualified."

Usually, Dyson is less diplomatic. When Elliott, who had been making steady progress for a time, persistently failed to clear 12 ft. 6 in. in the pole vault, Dyson was relatively tolerant at first. Eventually, seeing Elliott fail again, he could contain himself no longer. "He bawled me out from a great distance," says Elliott, "and ordered me to concentrate." With his next vault, Elliott cleared the bar.

Dyson relies on science as well as bluster to achieve his athletes' aims. He applies anatomy, mathematics, physiology and psychology to the sport, and talks informedly of such related subjects as coasting, second wind, principles of weight training and the mechanics of movement.

To this end, Dyson often uses films taken by himself. In 1948, when the American Olympic team was practising at the R.A.F. Station, Uxbridge, Dyson moved inconspicuously among them taking reels of film of every top athlete.

"When they got back to the States," he says, "one of their officials reported that every nation had shown interest in the team except the British. He didn't know I had a film record of all the talent they had. It wasn't surprising. I didn't introduce myself or ask permission."

Too Small For High Hurdles

A Londoner who left home at sixteen and joined the army, Dyson was a prominent but not world-class hurdler. For the 120-yards hurdles, he set an Essex county record of 15.4 seconds which still stands, and in 1938 did his best performance of 14.8 seconds. An all-rounder, he has also done an 11 ft. 6 in. pole vault, a 5 ft. 6 in. high jump, a 22 ft. 8 in. long jump, and a hundred yards sprint in 10.2 seconds.

"I wasn't very much of an athlete," he says now. "I chose the wrong event. At 5 ft. 8½ in., I was too small for the high hurdles."

In December, 1938, he was a corporal in the Somerset Light Infantry when he was appointed a lecturer in athletics at Loughborough College. On taking the job he was deprived of his amateur status, a move that temporarily embittered him and that has since been described by one senior A.A.A. official as "most unwise." Recalled to the army in 1939, he ran physical training schools overseas.

As a result of some of his work with American troops, he had an offer after the war to become coach to Illinois University, and was turning it over in his mind when an A.A.A. official called on him at Loughborough with an £800-a-year offer (he gets £1,200 today). Dyson considered it not very attractive, but accepted, and for the first six weeks divided his time between Loughborough and Oxford University.

At Oxford, he admits, he was a flop. "Nobody wanted to co-operate," recalls a friend. On a bitter February day in 1947, Dyson tried to persuade several athletes to clear the track of snow, but they refused. "I felt they objected to a coach who wasn't old-fashioned enough to touch his cap to them," he says.

Dismayed by his failure, Dyson was travelling from Paddington to Oxford a few mornings later when he spotted a newspaper picture of a girl sprinter training in the snow—at Oxford. Her name was Maureen Gardner. He made inquiries and learned that she was a local girl, not an undergraduate. "Tell her I'll coach her if she wishes," he told the groundsman. The following week she turned up, and Dyson helped to clear the snow for her. She was already an accomplished sprinter, but Dyson, following up his theory that Britain most needed athletes prepared to take on the neglected events, persuaded her to switch to hurdling.

By the end of July, she had broken four times the national record of 11.8 seconds for the eighty-metres hurdles and in 1948 broke the world record. After the Olympic Games that year, Dyson and Maureen were married. "I eased up on the discipline once we were engaged," he says. Today they have a semi-detached house in East London and two children, Timothy, aged five, and Judy, three.

The eclipse of Britain in the 1948 Olympics made Dyson fidgety. He sought and won permission to develop his personal team of athletes. He gave John Savidge his first lesson in the shot put and inside three months saw him add more than ten feet to his distance. Until then, no British shot putter had topped fifty feet. Savidge reached 51 ft. 4½ in. Next came Elliott, who is described by Dyson today as "Britain's greatest all-round athlete."

Chance For 1956 Olympics

Dyson's newest recruits are Westerhout and Dunkley. Athletes wondered what Dyson, the arch-apostle of the idea that Britain had a surfeit of first-class middle- and long-distance runners, could want with a miler like Dunkley.

Dyson kept quiet. He stood on the trackside at Motspur Park, timing Dunkley over a mile. Afterwards, he told Dunkley that, good as he was, he stood little chance of making Britain's 1956 Olympic team as a 1,500- or 5,000-metres runner. "You're still a baby," he said. "There's no reason why you shouldn't keep up your miling, but your immediate chances will be better in steeplechasing."

Dyson admits that he made the suggestion with some trepidation. Dunkley, however, agreed. On his second steeplechase, a few weeks ago, he clocked a seventy-two seconds lap average—a time it had taken Disley seven months to achieve. Dyson was delighted. At a lecture three days later, he was again driving home his point that Britain must "bung up the holes through which the gold medals are slipping." Geoffrey Dyson, the coach with the big idea, was running true to form. THE END

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON

REQUIEM FOR A WREN

by NEVIL SHUTE

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DITTTON

Somewhere Janet Prentice was living, troubled and alone. I had crossed the world to search for her, and so far I'd failed. But this girl might help

JESSIE PROCTOR, my parents' parlourmaid, committed suicide a few hours before I arrived home at our sheep-station in Coombargana, Australia. To me, her death was a nuisance—nothing more. And then, going through her papers, I made an astounding discovery: she was Janet Prentice, the girl my brother had loved. . . .

I am Alan Duncan, a crippled ex-fighter pilot. I had met her with Bill once, in England in 1944, shortly before he was killed. She was in the Wrens and my brother was a frogman.

The news of his death hit Janet at a bad time. Just a few days before, a German bomber had crossed the coast and Janet, quite unofficially, had fired at it with an Oerlikon and actually shot it down. Then they found there had been seven men aboard who had been trying to surrender. . . .

Trouble came thick and fast after that. Her father was killed; Dev, a mongrel dog that had been Bill's pet, was crushed under a tank. The tormented girl became obsessed with the idea that God was punishing her for shooting down the Junkers. She cracked up and was invalided out of the navy. Then her mother died. She was left almost alone in the world.

I didn't, of course, know any of this at the time. I had written, after the news of Bill's death, but she hadn't replied, and it wasn't long before I had troubles of my own. I was shot down in 1945, and went back home, a discontented misfit with two dummy feet.

But I couldn't settle down there. I began to feel guilty at losing touch with Janet. She had been my brother's intended wife—though I had told my parents nothing about her. Coombargana owed her something.

And so, in August, 1948, I had gone back to England to look for her—this girl who, for some reason I did not yet understand, had come to my parents' home to work as a parlourmaid. This girl who now lay dead. . . .

PART FOUR

Passenger From Harwich

I GOT to Oxford about three weeks before term began, and put up at the Randolph, and immediately began my search for somewhere to live. By the time term began I was very comfortably installed in rooms in Merton Street conveniently close to my college. I bought a nearly new car, and started in to look for Janet Prentice.

I shall pass over the details of my quest quite shortly, because it ended in a complete dead end. I went and had a talk with the Bursar of Wyckham, who remembered my letter and was very helpful. He introduced me to the Provost and three other dons who had been friends of Dr. Prentice, but they knew nothing that would help me.

Settle, in Yorkshire, seemed the best line of inquiry. Mrs. Blundell, the charwoman who had worked for Janet's mother till she died, thought that Janet had gone there to live with an aunt, so I went up to Settle for three days and saw the police, the stationmaster, the postmaster, the headmasters of two schools, the vicar, the Roman Catholic priest, the Methodist minister, the council clerk, and a chap in the food office who issued ration cards. Nobody had ever heard of Janet Prentice, and there seemed to be no young married woman in the town who answered the description in any way.

I went back to Oxford, disappointed.

At that time, in England, everybody had to have a registration card, which was possibly, I thought, a means of tracing Janet. As I took up my legal studies once again in Oxford, an elderly, battered undergraduate somewhat out of tune with his surroundings, I started an inquiry into registration cards with the Ministry of Labour, to ask where Janet Prentice was.

The reply was not very satisfactory. But I did learn at length that her registration card had been handed in at Harwich on November 14, 1946. At that time, if a British subject were to go to live abroad, the registration card had to be handed in on leaving the country and a new one taken out when he came back and wanted ration cards again. No new registration card had been issued to Miss Prentice, so presumably she was still abroad.

By this time the trail was growing very cold, but I could not give up until I had done everything within my power to find Bill's girl.

I went to the steamship company and succeeded in discovering that a Miss Prentice had crossed as a passenger from Harwich to Rotterdam on that November day two years before, but they could provide no clue as to her destination. I then went over to Holland myself and made inquiries at the British Embassy at The Hague, but no one could help me. There was no record at all of a Miss Janet Prentice.

So, for the time being, my search for Janet Prentice came to an end. Two years previously she had vanished into Europe and had left no trace behind her.

I went back to Oxford feeling frustrated and discouraged. I tried to settle down to my work but I badly needed some outside interest to absorb my restlessness. I needed, of course, some interest suited to my disability, and I thought perhaps I'd found it when I took up motor racing.

I had joined the London Aeroplane Club to do some flying again, more for mental discipline and to show myself I wasn't afraid to than because I really got much kick out of a Tiger Moth. At the flying club I found a number of enthusiastic motor racing types, young men who appeared at the aerodrome on stripped-down motor-bikes or ancient racing cars. None of them had much money, and all seemed to have cheerful and attractive young women perched athletically on their uncomfortable vehicles. I found their company congenial and their enthusiasm contagious.

EARLY in 1950 I bought a little racing car myself, but I soon found that while I could still fly an aeroplane all right I hadn't really got the nerve for motor racing. With my dummy feet, it took me a matter of minutes to wriggle in or out of the cramped little single-seater Cooper, so that I was continually troubled by the thought of fire. After a few races I gave up and handed the car over to a young friend of mine at the club, John Harwood, content to be the backer and pay the bills, and watch him win races on it.

I took Schools at Oxford in May, 1950, and

got a second in law and went in to Mr. A. N. Seligman's chambers in Lincoln's Inn with a view to getting called to the Bar. I got a flat in Half Moon Street quite handy to my club and settled down to live in London for a time, retaining my associations with the flying club and with my motor racing friends. Petrol was de-rationed shortly after I came down from Oxford so I got a ten-year-old Bentley and began to explore England.

I had visited the Admiralty soon after my return to England and I had got a rather scanty account of my brother Bill's death. The Second Sea Lord's office were helpful in the matter, however, and they suggested that I could get a fuller account from Warrant Officer Albert Finch of the Royal Marines, who had been Bill's companion the night when he was killed. Warrant Officer Finch, however, was now serving on the China Station and was not due home until November, 1950. I wrote to Finch and arranged with him that we would meet when he got home to England.

DURING the years when I was at Oxford I met a good many young Englishwomen, particularly in the motor racing crowd. They were cheerful, sensible girls mostly, but I didn't get involved with any of them. The best of them had a little of the same quality of forthrightness and community of interests that I had admired so greatly in Bill's girl. The more I saw of them the more they reminded me of Janet Prentice.

It was to be August, 1950, before I got any farther in my quest for her, however. There was a race-meeting on the perimeter track of the old Goodwood aerodrome, and I had entered the Cooper for two events with John Harwood driving it for the first time. I sent the Cooper down on a truck and left London at about five in the morning with a carload of my friends and two other cars with us, a party of fifteen or sixteen all told. It was a glorious summer morning and we made quick time down to West Sussex, and got the Cooper unloaded and filled up before nine o'clock.

We had brought a lot of food down in baskets and a Primus stove to boil a kettle, and the girls got breakfast for us on the grass beside the cars in the warm sun. There was a girl there I hadn't met before, Cynthia something—I forget her surname. Somehow the talk turned to the war, and she evidently knew all about

"Did you ever meet a Leading Wren Prentice," I said, "Janet Prentice?" Cynthia paused, with her cup poised in mid-air

I sat there with her portrait of Janet. "Can I have it," I said. She turned. "You think you're in love with her, don't you?"

me, though I knew nothing about her. She looked about twenty-seven and so had probably seen service of some sort, and I asked her casually, "What did you do in the Great War, Mummy?"

"Mummy yourself," she retorted. "I was in the navy."

I had had this happen once or twice before, but it had never led to anything. "In the Wrens?"

She nodded.

"What category were you in?" I asked.

"Boat's crew," she said. "First of all at Brightlingsea and then Portsmouth—in H.M.S. Hornet."

"When were you at Portsmouth?"

"In 1944 and 1945," she said. "I was demobbed from Hornet."

I LIT a cigarette, for I had finished eating and it was warm and pleasant sitting on the grass in the sun, listening to the engines revving up. "Did you ever meet a Leading Wren Prentice?" I inquired. "Janet Prentice. She was an ordnance Wren, I think, at H.M.S. Mastodon on the Beaulieu River."

She checked with her cup poised in mid-air. "You mean, the one who shot down the German aeroplane?"

I stared at her.

"There was a Leading Wren Prentice who shot down a German bomber with an Oerlikon," she said. "At Beaulieu, just before the invasion."

"It's possible," I said. "I never heard that about her, but it could be. She was engaged to my brother, but he was killed about that time. I've been trying to get in touch with her, but she seems to have disappeared."

"It must be the same," she said. "There couldn't have been two leading Wrens called Prentice at Beaulieu, at that time."

"Did you know her?" I inquired.

She shook her head. "I never met her. There was a lot of chat about it in the Service—naturally. It never got into the newspapers, of course. Security."

I nodded. "I wish to God I could find somebody that knew her and kept in touch with her," I said. "I've been trying for two years to find out where she is."

She chewed thoughtfully for a minute. "Viola Dawson would be the best person," she said at last. "Viola must have known her."

"Who's Viola Dawson?"

"She was another leading Wren," she said. "She was in boats with me at Brightlingsea, and then she went to Beaulieu. Viola must have known this Prentice girl."

"Can I get in touch with Viola Dawson?"

"I know Viola," she said. "She's got a flat in Earls Court Square. She's in the telephone book. If you like, I'll give her a ring tonight, and tell her about you, and say you'll be calling her."

"I wish you would," I said. "What would be a good time to ring her? Does she work?"

"She works in a film studio," she said. "She does continuity, whatever that may mean. I should think you'd get her in the evening about seven o'clock."

NEXT evening at seven o'clock I rang up Viola Dawson. "Miss Dawson," I said. "You won't know me—my name's Alan Duncan. I met a girl——"

"I know," she broke in. "Cynthia rang me. I've been expecting to hear from you, Mr. Duncan."

"Good," I said. "What I really wanted to find out from you was if you know anything about Janet Prentice."

"I knew her quite well in the war," she said.

"You haven't seen her recently?"

"I haven't," she replied. "I'm not sure even where she's living now."

"I don't think she's in England," I said. "I've been trying to find someone who could put me in touch with her." I paused, and then I said, "She was engaged to my brother, before he got killed."

"I know," she said. "I remember that happening."

"You do?"

"Oh yes. Janet and I were together at Beaulieu. We were great friends in those days, but I'm afraid I've lost touch with her now."

"Look, Miss Dawson," I said, "there's a lot I'd like to ask you about Janet. Could we have a meal together, do you think?"

"I'd like to," she said.

"What about tonight? Have you eaten yet?"

She seemed to hesitate. "No—not yet. Yes, I could come tonight, a bit later on."

"Suppose I call for you in about half an hour?"

"Give me a little longer—I've got some work I want to finish. Come about eight o'clock and we'll go out somewhere. Somewhere simple; I shan't have time to change."

"All right. I'll be with you at eight."

"Top flat," she said. "Right up at the very top, in the attic."

I went round in a taxi an hour later, and climbed the stairs of the old four-storeyed terraced house converted into little flats, up to the very top. It was such a place as any working girl in a good job might live in, decent but not affluent. I rang the bell, and she opened the door to me.

If her face hadn't been quite so lean, her jaw quite so definite, she would have been a very beautiful woman. She had dark hair and a beautiful complexion, slightly tanned. That she had been a boat's crew Wren was in the part; I realized directly I saw her that she would look exactly right at the wheel of a motor boat. Perhaps her dress may have put that into my mind, for she wasn't ready for me yet. She was wearing a dark blue linen overall coat, and she had an artist's brush in her hand.

"Come in, Mr. Duncan," she said. "I'm going to ask you to sit down and wait a few minutes while I finish off, before the light goes."

The door opened directly into her sitting-room, which was half studio. Various canvases were propped up on chairs or bookcases or stacked against the wall, and sketches and sketch-books littered her table. She was working at an oil painting upon an easel, and she went back to this without more ado, picked up her palette, and began to work again.

"Find somewhere to sit down for just a minute," she said. "That's sherry in the bottle on the tray—help yourself. I ought to have got this place all tiddley before you arrived, but it's such a pity to waste the light."

"Don't bother about me," I said. "I'll sit and watch. Cynthia didn't tell me that you were an artist. She said something about working in the movies."

"That's what I do," she said. "Continuity and set design. I do this as a spare time job, for fun. Give yourself a glass of sherry and give me one. I won't be very long."

I did as she told me, and took her glass to her before the easel, and saw the picture she was painting for the first time. It showed a brightly camouflaged motor torpedo boat ploughing through a rough sea. There was vigour in the painting and life in the pitch and heel of the boat, and in the gleaming, silvery light.

I gave her her sherry and stood back behind her, looking at the picture. "That's good, isn't it?" I asked. "I mean, that's what it must look like."

"I hope so," she said equably. She stood back for a moment, then bent forward and added a deft, sweeping stroke to one of the waves of the foreground, giving it form and texture. "You don't know much about painting, do you?"

"Not a thing," I said. "But I like that, I like it very much."

THERE was a pause while she worked. "Journeyman stuff," she said at last. "I'll never be any good, but I like doing it. I'll hang this on the wall and look at it till I've outgrown it. Then I'll sell it, and some stockbroker who was R.N.V.R. in the war'll give me twenty quid for it and love it for the rest of his life."

I glanced around the room, taking in the other pictures. Most of them seemed to have to do with naval matters, studies of ships and landing craft, and one or two portraits of naval officers.

"Are most of your things naval?" I asked.

"Most of them," she said.

She laid the palette down and wiped the brush upon a bit of newspaper. "You were in the R.A.F., Cynthia said."

"That's right," I replied.

"I remember Janet telling me about you," she said. "Didn't she pinch one of the boats and take you out in it, one Sunday?"

"That's right," I said again.

She scraped the palette with a palette-knife and wiped it with a cloth. "She said you were the hell of a chap," Viola remarked. "Fighter Command, three rings, and a chest full of ribbons."

"That was then," I said quietly. "Now I'm a fat cripple, living on wool and only interested in law."

She went on tidying up her things, for the light was failing and her work was over for the evening. "It comes to all of us," she said. "You think a thing's going on for ever when

Continued on page 30

Maid of all work in the air

by NORMAN PHILLIPS

Jim Harrison sells a bantam-weight plane that turns up anywhere in the world. It can spray crops, hunt whales, trap smugglers—or fly under Thames bridges

AT BIARRITZ the weather was fine when Jim Harrison settled his thirteen-stone frame behind the controls of his 1,400 lb. aeroplane and took off for Spain. Over the Pyrénées the skies darkened. Clouds settled around the peaks, and mist blanketed the ground. Harrison, a thirty-nine year old ex-R.A.F. man, looked for an emergency landing field.

He found it in an isolated valley with a short stretch of road. Some Spaniards were walking along the road, and Harrison waved at them to get out of his way. Unaccustomed to aeroplanes, the people on the ground waved back, forcing Harrison to choose the next best landing. Unperturbed, he set the plane down gently in a potato field near a girls' convent school.

At the Auster Aircraft company's factory near Leicester, where Harrison is one of the company's two pilot-salesmen, there is still good-natured "doubt" about why Harrison made a forced landing by a girls' school. However, no one questions the plane's ability to land on and take off from a potato field. The Auster—which costs between £2,000 and £2,750, depending on the model—can land almost anywhere.

In seventy-odd countries where the Auster is flown, it has used many unconventional landing places. An Australian doctor, rescuing a patient, landed one on a mountainside. In the Iraq desert, Customs patrols use Austers to pounce on smugglers' camel trains.

New uses for the aircraft no longer surprise Harrison or his flying sales colleague, Ranald Logan Porteous, another former R.A.F. man. When someone decides to break the law by flying under the Thames bridges, the Auster, with its thirty-six foot wing span, is almost an automatic choice.

Whaling expeditions use Austers in the Antarctic; New Zealand farmers spread fertilizers from them; Australian prospectors fit them with Geiger counters to search for uranium; and Middle East oil companies patrol their pipelines by Auster. In Britain, more Austers are flown than any other type of light plane. When one was wanted urgently in Indo-China, its convenient size allowed it to be sent there inside a freight aircraft.

Porteous once went to India to demonstrate the versatility of the plane. Invited to fly at an air display, he walked off with the title of India's Crazy Flying Champion.

"Crazy flying"—aerobatics—is performed by Porteous to show off the Auster's safety features. "Aerobatics," he says, "call for control power, strength and soundness of design."

Built from tubular steel, Austers have a reputation for ruggedness. Harrison and Porteous illustrate this with a battle report from Korea. There, a Sergeant Jermy, of the Royal Artillery, was involved in a display of involuntary aerobatics while observing gunfire over the Chinese lines. A shell exploded directly beneath his Auster and knocked it upside down. Jermy righted the plane and carried on with his patrol.

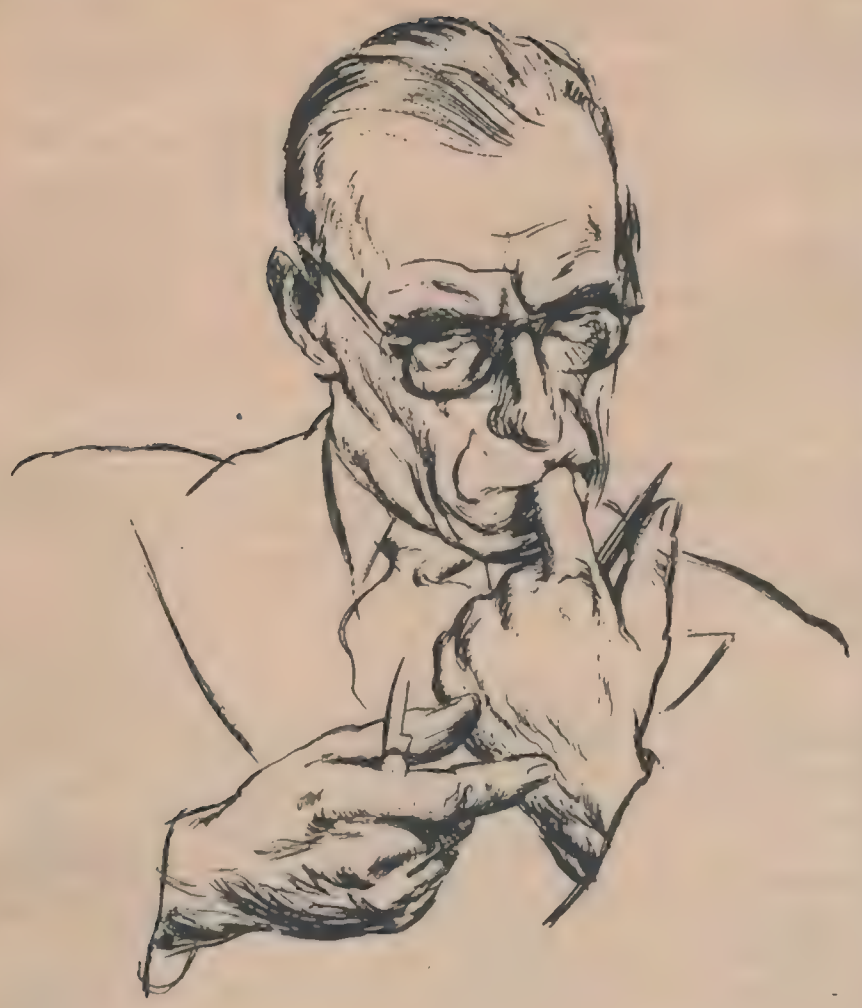
To capture the New Zealand market in the face of American competition, Harrison and Porteous will soon be testing a new model Auster. This plane, which is costing £250,000 to develop, will be specially designed for phosphate dropping and will carry a bigger payload.

Increased capacity will also be useful to crop dusters, who like the Auster because it flies low and reasonably fast. (Top speed is about 127 miles an hour.) One British firm maintains a fleet of Austers and flies them off to such jobs as dusting the Sudanese cotton crop or attacking insect pests in Swiss hillside orchards.

Austers have also been adapted to carrying

An Auster used by a business man lands on a road in India. With their thirty-six feet wing span, Austers can come down and take off almost anywhere—even in a potato field

Pilot-salesman Harrison explains the Autocar cockpit controls to Pat Evans, a worker at Auster headquarters



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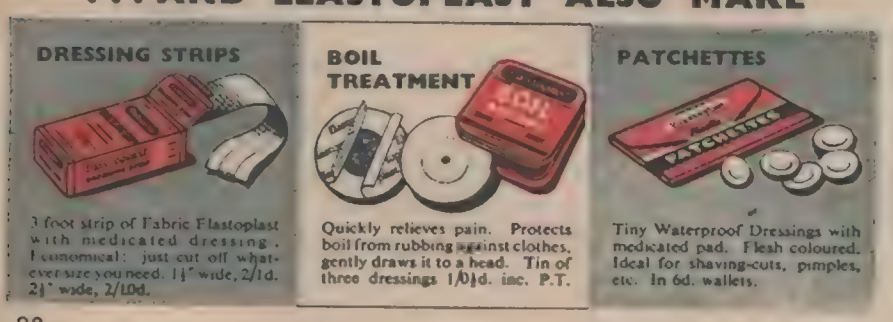
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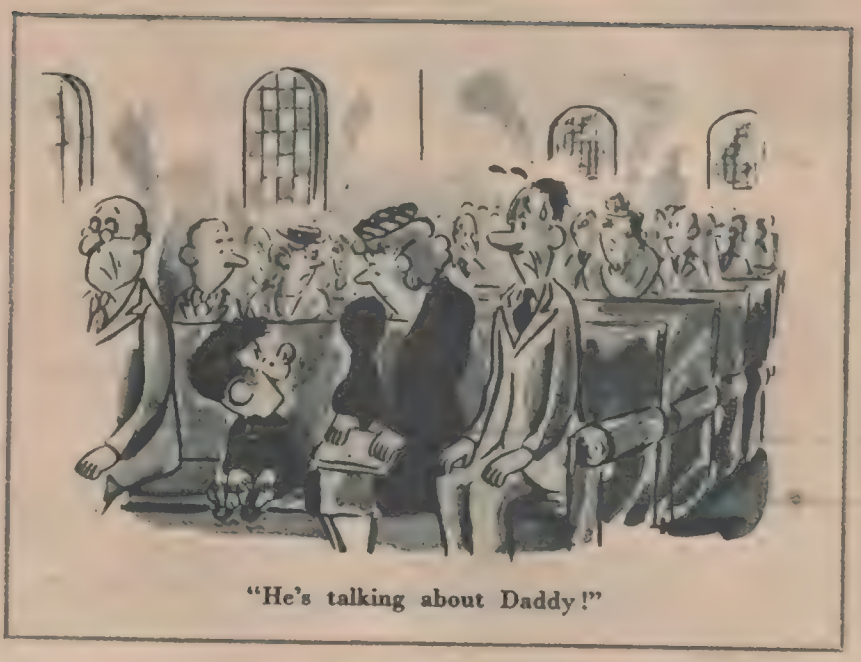


"He's talking about Daddy!"

sick and wounded (one stretcher case and an attendant), animals, and even coal. Pigs, seals, deer, goats and dogs are regular passengers on a charter service between Devon and Lundy, eleven miles off the coast.

Austers are also equipped to carry advertising neon signs mounted underneath the wings. One of these flying signboards operates over Singapore. Another means of attracting attention is by fitting powerful loudspeakers, through which the pilot talks directly to people on the ground.

While testing a loudspeaker-equipped model, Porteous once flew over the Aero Club at Sywell. From a height of six hundred feet he hailed the steward and placed an order for supper. By the time Porteous had landed and walked to the clubhouse, the meal was on the table waiting for him.

Six models of the Auster are now produced, ranging from a two-seater trainer for aerobatic club training to a four-seater called the Autocar. All of these are closely related to the original plane constructed in thirty-five days during the winter of 1939.

Harrison, one of the original members of the firm, was in charge of organizing material and stores when Auster production began. When war broke out, planes were leaving the factory at the rate of one a day. The rate was increased later to thirty-five a week.

Wartime demand for Austers arose from a suggestion made by Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Bazeley, of the Royal Artillery. He suggested that instead of sending artillery officers forward to check on the accuracy of gunfire, aircraft should be used as observation posts.

These Air Observation Post squadrons are now unique Army-R.A.F. units in which airmen service and maintain the R.A.F.-owned Austers, and the planes are flown by military pilots.

Tricked The Enemy

First used in the North African campaign, the unarmed spotter planes soon attracted the attention of the Luftwaffe. In Tunisia, seven Nazi fighters once attacked a lone Auster. The army pilot headed for a large circular depression that was big and deep enough to allow his plane to fly in tight circles at minimum altitude.

Because of their speed, the enemy fighters could not turn swiftly enough and had to be content with short bursts of fire before overshooting the target. They were so preoccupied with trying to down their tiny opponent that they failed to notice the arrival of a Spitfire flight. The Spitfires destroyed two Nazis and put the remainder to flight, allowing the Auster to escape.

On the Italian front, King George VI made his first flight in an Auster. An army pilot flew him over the Arno River battlefield. The maquis in France under the German occupation flew Austers carrying as many as five passengers on sabotage operations. In Holland, the Dutch underground called for a fleet of these spotter planes to evacuate British wounded from a secret hospital behind the German lines.

Men with walkie-talkies guided the aircraft down on to a field beside the hospital. A shuttle service went on all night, unknown to the Germans.

On the North-West European front, the A.O.P. squadrons added another sideline when they fitted cameras to their Austers to provide what came to be known as the "Happy Snap Service." Army commanders could order photographs of territory to be attacked and within four hours the pictures were taken, printed and delivered.

Attack Called Off

In the Far East, one A.O.P. squadron was trained in landing and taking off from aircraft carriers. Pilots with this experience were assigned to a full-scale invasion of Akyab, on the Burma coast. One of them flew over Akyab in advance of the attack. He saw no signs of Japanese.

The invasion commander, unconvinced that there was no opposition, decided to proceed with a full bombardment and assault. But before the zero hour, Major Jimmy Jarrett flew in and landed his Auster on Akyab. Leaving his batman as hostage, Jarrett flew back to the invasion commander with the local headman. The attack was called off and Akyab liberated without any damage to the area or to any of its inhabitants.

Kuala Lumpur, in Malaya, was surrendered by the Japanese to an Auster pilot who flew a hundred miles from a carrier at sea. In Malaya today, the A.O.P. squadrons are playing a vital rôle in the anti-bandit campaign. Austers are used to reconnoitre the jungle for bandit hiding places.

Reliability over jungle country is also appreciated by civilian fliers, and Harrison's clients include a Venezuelan mining company which uses an Auster for communication and supplies. The plane makes the journey from coast to interior in ninety minutes. Through the jungle, the trip would take four weeks.

Harrison's sales territory takes in North and South America, Southern Europe, Turkey and Australia. Porteous looks after Northern Europe, the Middle East, the Far East and Africa.

On one visit to Japan, Porteous was invited to fly in a demonstration on the occasion of the Crown Prince's coming of age. Thinking that he would be one of many airmen to perform, Porteous duly arrived at an airfield outside Tokyo.

A crowd of thirty thousand surrounded the field. Only one aircraft was on display, a single-engined Auster. To his surprise, Porteous learned that he would be the sole performer.

Soaring six hundred feet over the spectators, the Auster did not disappoint them. So popular was its display of aerobatics that a second performance had to be given before the crowd of Japanese would go home. THE END

MY FRIEND LIFFEY

Continued from page 12

own pie suddenly gone. Twice today she had heard her father mention her mother, each time with a sense of loss. He had not spoken that way for three or four years. Perhaps it really was time they moved to another place, where there would be no memories and no associations. Later in the evening, she would tell him about the flat she had seen. Planning to move might be a good diversion for him—what he really needed just now.

When Sally came into the living-room after finishing the dishes, she found her father sitting as he had been in the morning, staring idly into space.

"Where's the paper, Dad?" she asked.

"The paper?" said Mr. McHugh, as if the question had brought him back from a long way off. "I didn't get it," he answered frankly.

Sally stood for a moment irresolute. Then she picked up her handbag from the bookcase. "I'll run across the road, Dad, and get one so that we'll know what's on the television."

Before her father had time to remonstrate, she had let herself out of the house. Surprised to find the night colder than she had expected, she hurried across to the corner shop. She had picked up a paper from the counter and had asked for some chocolate, when she heard her name spoken.

She turned to find Mrs. Whaley, the neighbour who owned the little dog, Tessie, beside her.

"Miss McHugh," she said, "I'm so sorry to hear about Liffey."

Sally glanced at the woman's face and noticed that her large brown eyes looked more sombre than ever with sympathy.

"Thank you, Mrs. Whaley. We had to have him put to sleep."

"So I heard. I saw your father walking in the park today. He looked sort of—well, sort of lost." She smiled and her face lit up. "But I know you'll get him another dog soon."

Sally's cheeks flushed indignantly. "My father doesn't want another dog," she said stiffly.

"Are you sure?" Mrs. Whaley asked. "It's the only loss we can get back again, you know." Her eyes grew sombre once more. "It's the only heartbreak we can heal," she added, more to herself than to Sally.

"Well, thank you," Sally said and turned abruptly away.

She paid for the paper and the chocolate, hurried out of the shop, and crossed the road. But she did not go home. Instead, she came to a halt on the pavement. In her pocket her fingers were curled tightly around the laundry slip. Tears, of which she was not even aware, spilled down her cheeks.

Suddenly she made up her mind. She pulled out the laundry slip and moved nearer to a lighted shop window to read the phone number scribbled on it. She hesitated a moment, but she had no defence now against the thoughts Mrs. Whaley's words had touched off. Quickly she turned and walked to the phone box on the corner.

WHEN Sally got home, her father looked up from a magazine that he held in his hands. "I thought you were lost," he said, "or strayed or stolen."

"Did you?" Sally said non-committally.

She handed her father the paper and laid the chocolate on the table beside him.

"See what's on the television, Dad," she added. "I'll be back in a minute."

She went up to her bedroom and sat down at her desk. Then she opened her cheque-book, quickly wrote out a cheque and stuffed it into her pocket.

When she came back into the living-room, her father handed her the paper.

"It's one of those panel games," he said.

"Do you want to see it?" Sally asked.

"I don't know—I suppose it'll be better than nothing," Mr. McHugh said grudgingly.

After switching on, Sally sat down at the other end of the settee. Her eyes wandered from the screen to the faded wallpaper, the yellowed paints and the worn carpet.

She bit her lip to hold back her tears and forced herself to watch the programme. It was just ending when the door-bell shrilled.

Sally jumped to her feet. "I'll go, Dad."

"Turn that rumpus off first," said Mr. McHugh.

Sally switched off the set. Then she went to the front door. She found Ben waiting with the pup in his arms.

"He's just the dog for your dad," Ben whispered as he shifted the pup to Sally's arms. "He's made for an old man."

"He's quite an armful," Sally said and pulled the cheque from her pocket.

"Thanks," Ben replied. "Got him? He snoozed all the way over and he's a bit limp and sleepy."

"Thank you so much for bringing him."

"Don't mention it."

"Sally! What is it?" Mr. McHugh called from the living-room.

"In a minute, Dad."

SALLY tucked the pup's oversized paws in more securely. She shut the front door with her foot and stood for a second to get her breath before going into the room.

"What were you——?" Mr. McHugh began and, seeing the pup, stopped. A frown of displeasure creased his forehead.

Sally set the young dog down on his feet. He shook himself hard and lifted his head. He looked around the room slowly and spotted Mr. McHugh. Then he stepped across to the settee, sat down before the old man with one haunch sprawled puppy-fashion, and stared at him.

Sally seated herself unobtrusively on the settee. "Ben brought him, Dad," she explained. "I phoned him."

Mr. McHugh nodded. He leaned forward, still frowning, and held out his hand. The pup got up and came towards him. He smelled his hand thoroughly; then he set about licking each finger with his bright red tongue. Gradually the old man's face softened and, almost unconsciously, he began to scratch the pup behind the ears in the exact spot where Liffey had liked to be scratched. The pup stood quietly, blinking with contentment. Finally he opened his mouth and yawned so hard he squealed.

Mr. McHugh chuckled. "Are we keeping you up, boy?" he asked. He smiled down at the dog and waved his arm in the direction of Liffey's chair. "Have a seat, won't you?"

The pup twisted his head quizzically, the way an airedale does. Then he turned deliberately and stepped across the room to Liffey's chair. He sniffed it thoroughly and climbed up on the seat. Having settled himself comfortably, he arched his back so that the tip of his chin reached the arm.

Sally glanced at her father. She saw him smiling indulgently at the pup, his face relaxed and softened. Then she, too, looked over at the dog. The bright light of the nearby lamp shone on his jet-black saddle and brought out the golden brown of his muzzle and sprawling paws. "He's sort of fresh and new-looking, isn't he, Dad?" she commented.

"He's certainly moved in fast enough," Mr. McHugh replied and began to hum a tune. "Know that one?" he asked.

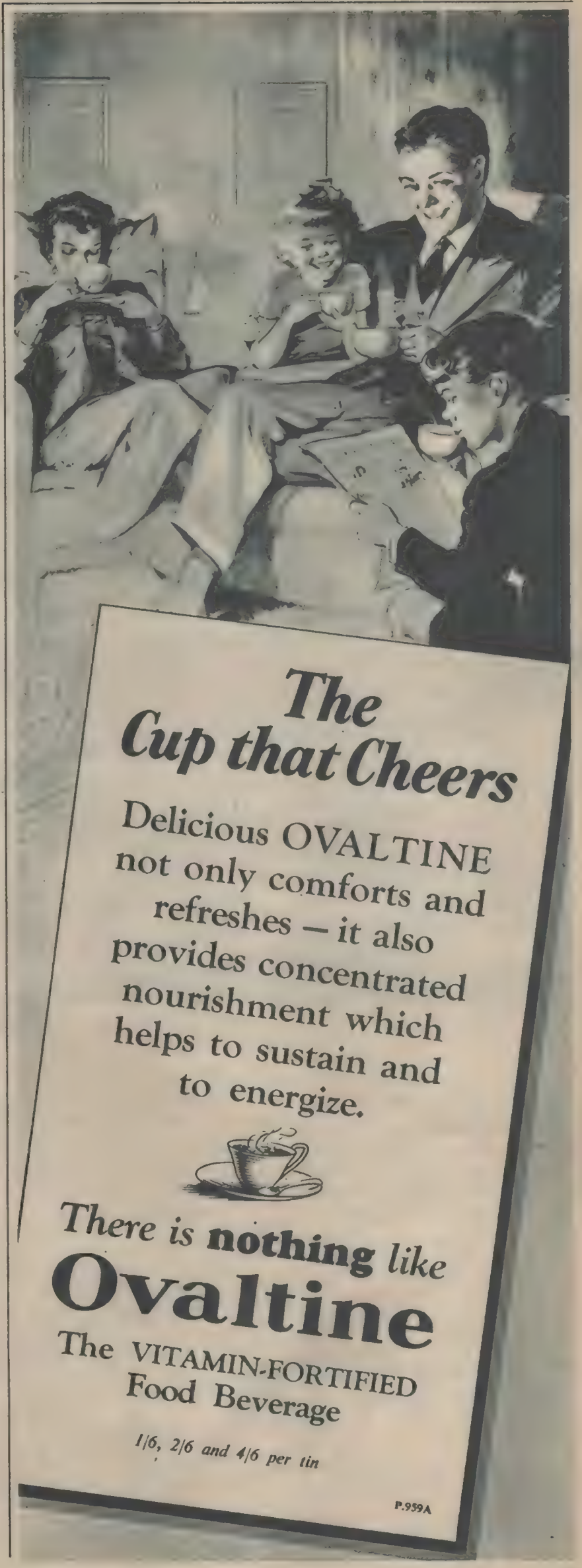
Sally shook her head.

"Where the River Shannon's flowing," her father sang in a voice that quavered slightly, "where the three-leafed shamrock grows. Shannon! That's what I'm going to call him."

He picked up one of the bars of chocolate, broke off half and handed Sally the other piece.

"I always name my dogs," he began, and paused to take a generous bite of the chocolate, "after the rivers of Ireland."

THE END



Many not-so-slim women never wear the clothes they really want to. They constantly make do with second-best. The sad truth is that elegant clothes are not made for awkward figures. Don't accept this unhappy state of affairs. Do something about it. Slim and your fashion future will be very bright. Here, for a start, is an exercise for the waist:

FIRST LEFT!

With feet well apart swing the right arm up and down towards the left foot. As far as you can go. At the same time swing the left arm back in a straight line. Ten times for each arm is the daily dose. After a few weeks, invest in a shorter tape-measure.

LAST WORD! *There's always crispy, crunchy*

RYVITA

makes you fit—
keeps you slim

REQUIEM FOR A WREN

Continued from page 26

you're young, and then you wake up and you find it doesn't, and you've got to find something fresh to do. New interests."

She finished putting her things away, gave me another sherry, stood for a minute looking at her painting, and then went through to another room to wash and get ready to come out to supper. I sat down and rested, pleasantly lulled by her sherry, studying her pictures. She had made a better job of adapting herself to Peace than I had.

She came out presently, pulling on a raincoat over her blouse and skirt. "There's a little restaurant just around the corner that I go to," she said. "Will that be all right for you?"

"Anywhere you say," I replied.

She turned to a cupboard, opened it, and stooped down on the floor rummaging among the contents. "There's something here I'd like to show you," she said. She pulled out a big floppy sketch book. "I think it's in here."

She flipped the pages through and turned the book back, and laid it on the table before me. It was a vigorous drawing of a Wren firing an Oerlikon at an aeroplane flying very low towards her. The Wren was a broad-shouldered, dark-haired girl, hatless, leaning back upon the strap that held her in the shoulder rings, tense, unsmiling, intent upon the sights. I had only met her once six years before but she was unmistakable to me.

"Janet Prentice," I said.

She nodded. "I did that the same evening, in the Wrennery. I was in the boat alongside when the thing came over." She paused. "I think that's pretty well what it looked like."

"Cynthia told me she had shot a Junkers down," I said. "I never heard the details. I think that must have been after I met her."

"Probably it was," she said. "I think it was after your brother got killed—no—I'm not sure about that." She paused, and then closed the book. "Let's go out now and have supper."

She took me to her restaurant. I found Viola Dawson easy to talk to, so that when we were sitting smoking with a cup of coffee I had no difficulty in speaking to her frankly.

"I want you to understand where I stand in this matter," I told her. "I only met her once, that day when she took Bill and me out in the boat."

She nodded. "Janet was afraid of meeting you that time because Bill had told her about you. She wasn't a bit happy when she went off with the boat. She was afraid she wouldn't make the grade with you."

I stared at her. "I'd never have thought that. . . ." I paused, and then I said, "She made the grade all right. I thought she was a fine girl, and she'd have made Bill a good wife."

I paused for a minute to collect my thoughts. "She was very good for Bill altogether." I said. "I thought that day that he was feeling the strain a bit—and I think having her around helped him a lot."

She nodded. "They should have given him a rest," she remarked. "The trouble was, of course, there were so few of them that had the skill to do the job, and so much to be done before the invasion."

"I know," I said. "They were expendable. The thing that matters now is this. She made Bill very happy in his last weeks. I should have kept in touch with her, and I didn't. She should have been a friend of the family for the remainder of her life."

I went on to tell her why I hadn't kept in touch with Janet Prentice, about the show at Evère aerodrome, about my time in hospital, about my preoccupation with my own affairs. "Not so good," I said quietly at the end. "But that's what happened."

"I lost touch with her, too," said Viola. "I'm just as bad, I suppose, because she needed her friends after the war. But—one can't keep up with everyone." She glanced at me. "You know that she was trying to get back into the Wrens?"

"No," I said. "I never heard that about her."

She thought for a minute. "I went and saw her just after the invasion, at Oxford," she said. "I was on leave. She wasn't up to much then—sort of weepy and very, very nervous. It was just before she got her discharge from the Wrens and she knew that it was coming. She took it as if it was a sort of disgrace, I think. The Junkers she'd shot down was worrying her, too."

"I don't know anything about that Junkers," I said. "What was it that she did?"

She told me as much as she knew. I called the waiter and ordered a fresh pot of coffee, and lit another cigarette for her. At last I was learning something real about Janet Prentice.

"It was all a bit depressing," Viola said at last. "She'd been such a fine person a few months before, and now she was all to pieces."

I said nothing.

"I saw her again in the summer or autumn of 1946," Viola said. "I saw her mother's death in the paper, and I was driving to Wales or somewhere so I wrote to her and fixed up to have lunch with her in Oxford on my way through." She paused. "It was just after the funeral and she was packing up the house and selling everything. Her one idea was to get back into the Wrens."

"Why was she so keen on that?" I asked.

She shrugged her shoulders. "Why do any of us look back on our war service with such pleasure, in spite of everything?"

"Did she get back?" I asked.

She shook her head. "They wouldn't have her."

"Why not? She must have had a very good war record."

"I know."

There was a pause, and then she said, "They're very, very careful who they take in. Even in peace time there are many more girls trying to get into the Wrens than they want. They can afford to be choosy."

"I see," I said.

"I know a girl who stayed on in the Wrens," she told me. "She's a second officer, in the Admiralty. She tells me that they won't have anyone back, however good, if there's the slightest hint of any nervous trouble."

We sat in silence for a minute. "When you saw her in 1946," I asked presently, "was she really bad?"

"She wasn't raving, if that's what you mean," Viola said, a little sharply.

"I want to try and understand," I told her.

"I know," she replied, rather more gently. "She was very lonely for one

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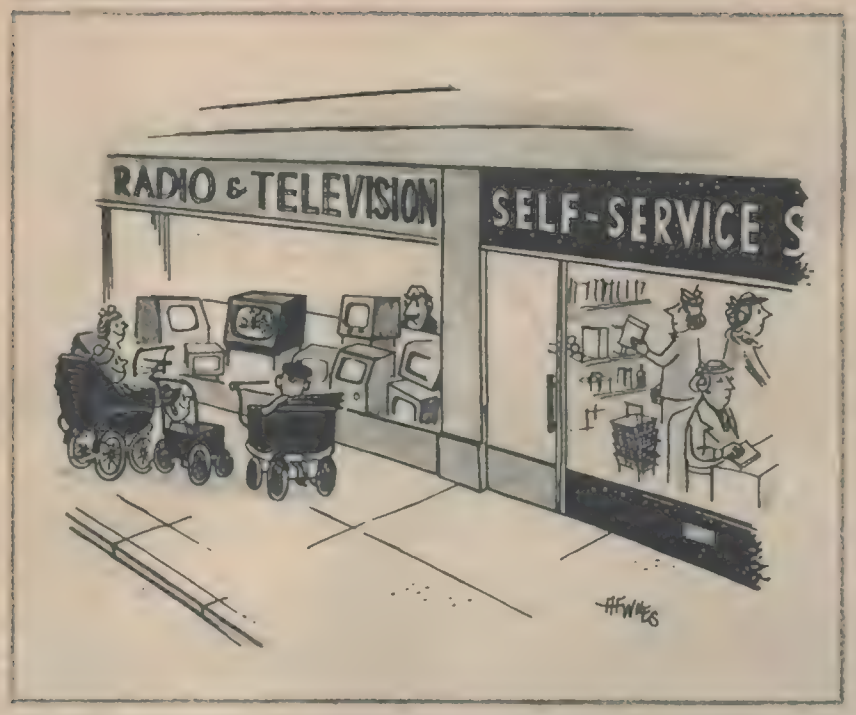


thing, I think. She was missing her mother, of course, and she didn't seem to have any relatives left in England to speak of."

"Was she still nervous?"

She shook her head. "Not in the way she was when I saw her before, the time I saw her just after the invasion. She'd got herself under control. I don't think anything was very real to her that had happened since she left the Wrens, though."

"Was she still worrying about the Junkers?"

VIOLA nodded. "It was still very much upon her mind—that, and your brother's death. But what really did worry me was the way she talked about your brother's dog."

"Dev?" I said. "What about him?"

"Bert Finch brought him over to her after your brother's death," she said.

I sat in silence while she told me about Dev. Ten minutes later I said, "It was that that really finished her? When the dog got killed?"

She nodded. "You see, it wasn't just a dog that she'd got fond of. It was your brother's dog. She told me in the Wrennery that evening that she'd let your brother down by not taking more care of his dog. Of course, I didn't pay much attention to that at the time, because she was in a sort of a breakdown and going off on leave next day. But after her mother's death, more than two years later, she told me the same thing.

"I tried to tell her it was my fault as much as hers, that I shouldn't have let him out of the boat on to the hard. But it didn't register with her. She seemed to have got a sort of horror and disgust with herself that she hadn't looked after Bill's dog better."

There was a pause, and then she added, "Something broke in her when that dog got killed that took a lot of breaking, and would have taken a lot of building up. And it never got built up. . . ."

She looked at her watch presently, and it was half-past ten. "I must go," she said. "I've got work tomorrow."

I paid the bill and we left the restaurant. We walked slowly together the short distance to her flat, and paused for a minute on the pavement outside before I left her.

"There's a girl called May Spikins who might possibly know where she is," she said. "She's the Q.O. Wren who worked with her. I think I might be able to get you her address."

I saw a good deal of Viola Dawson after that. She rang me up a few days later to give me information about May Spikins, who was May Cunningham by that time, and when I suggested that we might have lunch together she seemed pleased. She was almost as anxious as I was to find Janet Prentice, for they had been close frends in the war, and Viola was genuinely worried to find that they had drifted so far apart.

I went to see May Spikins in her new house in the new town at Harlow, and she put me on to Petty Officer Waters in his tobacconist's shop in the Fratton Road at Portsmouth. Then, about Christmas time, Warrant Officer Finch came home and I went down in January and saw him at Portsmouth. From him I got the account of Bill's death, and in the long vacation of 1951 I went to France and spent some time endeavouring to find out where Bill had been buried. As I have said, I failed, but it wasn't very important to know that in any case.

At each step in this matter Viola and I used to meet to talk things over. Presently she began coming with me to motor-race meetings, and twice I visited her film studio and spent an afternoon upon the set with her, and had lunch with her in the commissary.

She was a very easy person for a man like me to go about with, for we had the service background as a link. I found presently that I was telling her about my life in the R.A.F., almost unconsciously, a thing that I had never been able to talk about to anybody, and I woke up one day to realize uneasily that we were getting very close.

The realization troubled me. I liked Viola, and I didn't want to hurt her.

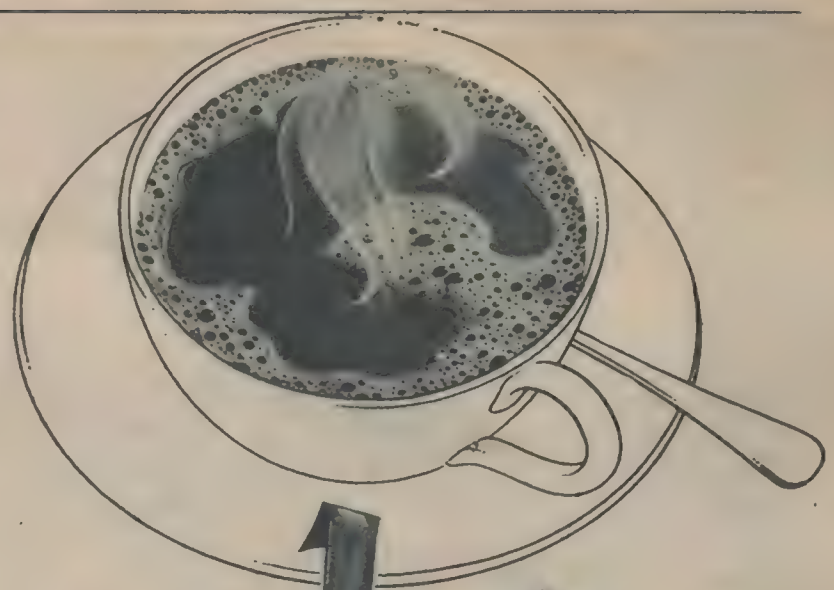
It all came to a head next winter. She had been to Switzerland ski-ing for a fortnight and had come back with a lot of action photographs, and from these she had been working up a painting of a chap on a snow slope doing a fast turn. It was part of her artistic development that she was getting away from naval subjects now. She had asked me to come round to her flat to have a look at this picture, and I went with slight reluctance. At some stage I would have to hurt her, and I didn't want to do it.

I WENT one afternoon at a weekend, intending to take her out to a movie and dinner. We talked about the picture for a few minutes, and then she went through to her kitchenette to make tea, and I dropped down upon the sofa.

She had been rummaging in the cupboard where she kept her old sketch books, and the big, floppy things were all out upon the floor. I turned them over till I found the one that I thought contained the sketch of Janet Prentice firing the Oerlikon, and turned the pages.

Presently, I came upon a pencil sketch of Janet Prentice. It was a head and shoulders portrait, exactly as I had seen her in the boat at Lymington. She wore a round Wren cap and a duffel coat, the hood thrown back upon her shoulders. I sat there looking at the square, homely face that I remembered so very well, thinking of that day.

Viola came in as I sat motionless with the book upon my knee. She



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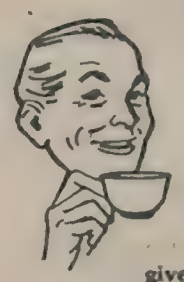

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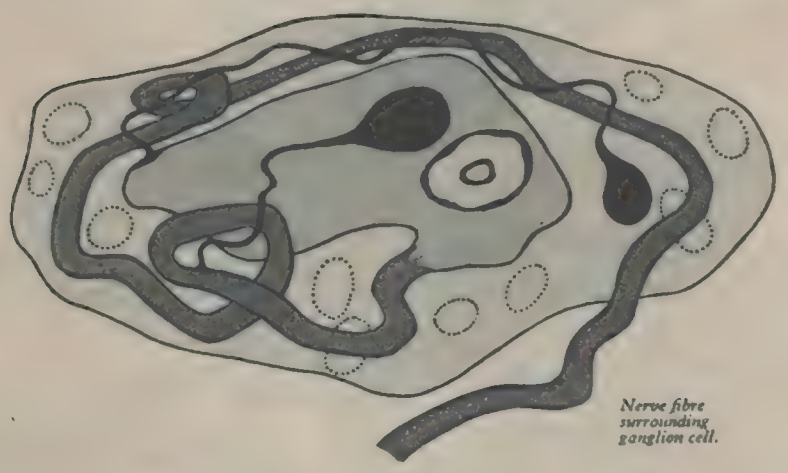

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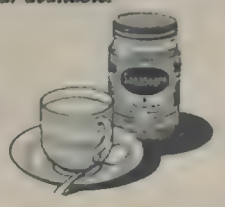

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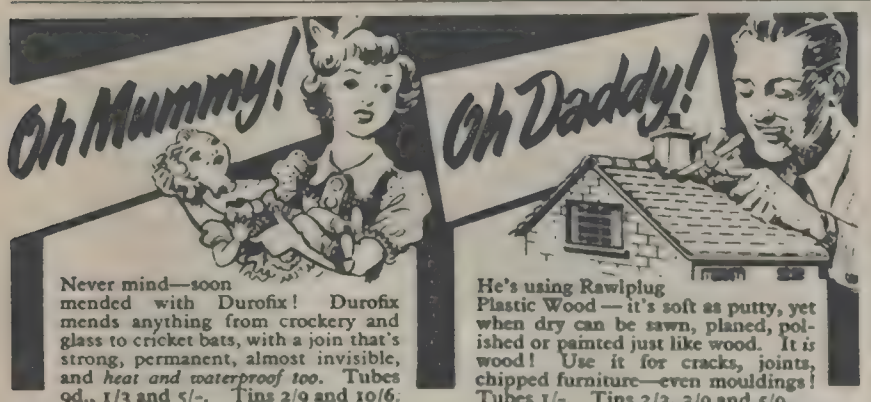

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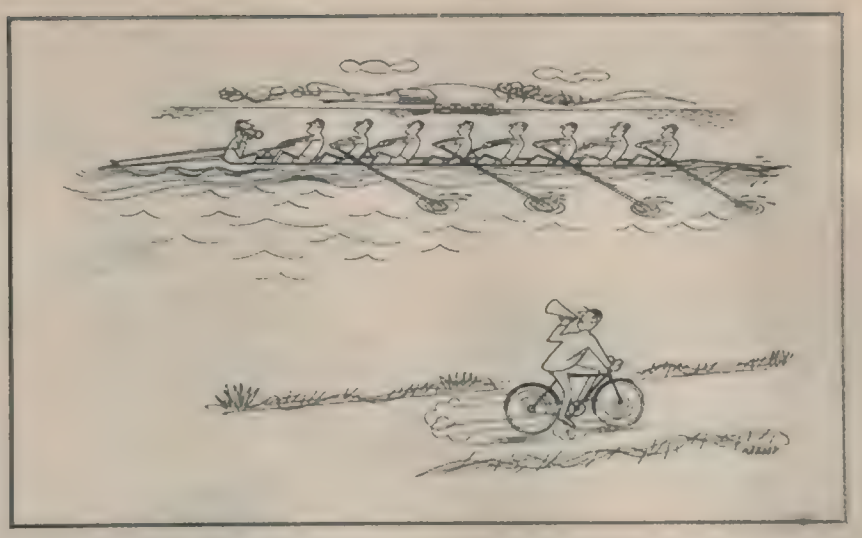

asked, "What have you got there?" and looked over my shoulder.

"Portrait of Janet Prentice," I said. "Can I have it?"

"What do you want it for?" she asked. There was sharpness in her tone, so that I knew there was trouble coming. It had to come some time, of course.

"It's very like her," I said quietly. I wanted a picture of her very badly. "I'd like to have it, if you can spare it."

She did not answer that at once. Then she said, "You think you're in love with her, don't you?"

"I don't think anything of the sort," I replied. "She was Bill's girl. If he'd come through, she'd have been my sister-in-law. We ought to have a picture of her."

"It's absolutely crazy," she said dully. "You only met her once for a few hours nearly eight years ago."

"It would be absolutely crazy if I was," I retorted. "You're imagining things." I paused, and then I added weakly, "I'm just trying to find her."

She turned to me, suddenly furious. "And when you've found her, what then? Do you think she'll still be the same person she was eight years ago? Are you the same person you were in 1944? For God's sake be your age, Alan, and stop behaving like a teen-ager."

She was quite right, of course, but I wasn't going to stay and have her talk to me like that. I got to my feet. "About time I beat it, after that," I said. "I'm sorry, Viola, if I've done anything to hurt you. I didn't mean to." And I made for the door.

She stood watching me go, and I half expected the embarrassment that she would call me back and ask me to stay, and so prolong the inevitable. But she didn't do it, and I closed the door behind me and made my way slowly down her stairs for the last time. She had said that I was absolutely crazy, but I had known that myself for quite a long while now.

Two days after that I got a note from Viola; it enclosed the little pencil sketch of Janet Prentice, cut from her sketch-book. It said simply,

My dear Alan,

Here's your sketch, as a peace-offering. I think that you're mad as a March hare, and I don't want to see you any more, so please don't ring up or write and thank me for sending this.

Good luck, Viola.

London wasn't much fun after that. I had grown to depend on Viola more than I quite realized for company, and when it all came to an end I didn't know what to do with myself. I had my work in chambers, of course, and I had the club and motor racing still, but as 1952 progressed I began to take less interest in these things, and to feel that a time was approaching when I should have had enough of England.

Reports from home weren't too good, either; both my father and my mother were beginning to fail in health and to find the work of the station a burden, and a wistfulness was starting to creep into their letters when they mentioned my plans for the future.

I began to feel that I should be at home. My search for Janet Prentice seemed to have petered out. In the uncertain climate of the English spring and summer I began to think with longing of the warm settled weather of the Western District in summer.

I had another year to do before I could be called to the Bar. I didn't really want to stay in England for another year, and it may well have been the really big mistake of my life that I did so. But having set myself to one of the learned professions it seemed silly to abandon it when it lay within my grasp.

I ACHIEVED my ambition and was called formally to the Bar in September, 1953. I booked a passage home by sea to leave England at the beginning of October, and in the last month I was winding up my affairs in England and saying goodbye to all my friends. I was troubled about Viola Dawson, the best friend I had made in London, and uncertain if I ought to see her to say goodbye to her or whether that would only upset her and so be an unkindness. But she solved the matter, because ten days before I sailed she wrote to me. She said,

Dear Alan,

I hear that I've got to congratulate you on being called. I'm so glad. And Cynthia tells me that you're sailing on the fifth. I want to see you before you leave, and it's about Janet Prentice so you'll probably come.

I shall be dining at Bruno's, the little restaurant I took you to the first night we met, next Thursday at eight. Will you come and dine with me there? Don't come to the flat.

Yours, Viola.

I was waiting for her in the little restaurant when she came. She was paler than usual, I thought, not looking very well. She seemed pleased to see me, and I ordered sherry while we discussed what we would eat. I asked her what she had been doing, and she said, "Working."

"No holiday?" I asked.

She shook her head. "There seems to have been such a lot to do."

The waiter took our order and went away, and then she turned to me. "I've got news for you," she said. "Janet Prentice."

"What about her?" I asked.

"She's living in Seattle, or she was about a year ago."

"Seattle—in America?"

She nodded. "On the west coast somewhere, isn't it?" She smiled faintly. "It was Seattle she was going to, when she left Oxford, not Settle. The charwoman got it wrong."

"What on earth's she doing there?"

"Didn't you say that she was going to live with an aunt in Settle?"

"That's what the charwoman said."

"She had an uncle who was on the faculty of Stanford University in the United States," she reminded me. "Is that in Seattle?"

"I think it's on the west coast somewhere," I said slowly. "I always thought it was near San Francisco."

"Anyway, she's living in Seattle

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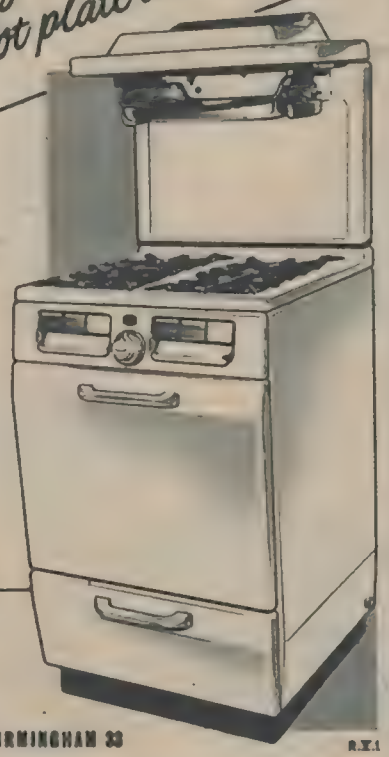

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Consider your verdict

by

RUSSELL SCOTT, LL.B.

JANE had a fur coat worth £200. One night it was stolen from her home, and the police failed to trace either thief or coat.

About a year later, the coat appeared in the window of a furrier's shop in the same town; the furrier had purchased it in good faith. It caught Leonora's eye, and at the marked price of £100 it was a bargain, so she bought it.

Subsequently, Jane saw Leonora wearing the coat and, after some argument and a series of letters, she sued Leonora for its return or for payment of its true value, £200.

"The coat is mine, and it should be returned to me," Jane told the judge in court. "The thief who stole it could not pass on the right to own it. Leonora may be honest, but I have lost two hundred pounds by the theft. She will lose her money by giving it back to me, but that will be because the burglar will have deprived her of the coat's value instead of me, the rightful owner."

"I bought the coat honestly and in good faith, without knowing of the theft," replied Leonora in her defence. "Even the furrier was ignorant of the circumstances. Jane has suffered a loss, but that's no reason why her loss should be transferred to me.

"The theft was a year ago, and that is plenty of time for proper steps to be taken to get the coat back. I cannot agree that Jane has more right to the coat than I have, for honest possession is nine points of the law."

What is your verdict? For the legal position, turn to page 36

now," said Viola. "I've got her address for you." She picked up her bag and opened it, and took out a folded slip of paper, and pushed it towards me across the table. "That's what you've been looking for," she said quietly.

I picked up the paper and opened it, and it read: *Miss J. E. Prentice, 8312 37th Ave., N.W., Seattle, Washington, U.S.A.*

I stared at it for a minute, and then asked: "How did you get hold of this, Viola?"

"Dorothy Fisher got it for me," she said a little wearily. "The girl I told you about, who stayed on in the Wrens. She's a second officer, in the Admiralty. Janet's been writing in every few months, ever since the Korean war started."

"Trying to get back into the Wrens?"

She nodded. "She wrote in when the Korean war broke out, and about six months later. Then about eighteen months ago she put in an application to rejoin the Wrens through the Naval Attaché in Washington, and that went to the Admiralty, of course. They were getting a bit fed up with her by that time, so they wrote her rather a sharp letter, saying that her application was on the file and would be considered if and when the expansion of the Service justified the re-engagement of ex-naval ratings in her category. They haven't heard from her since then.'

"That was eighteen months ago?" I asked.

"It would be about that. I think their letter to her was dated some time in April."

The waiter came with soup, and I sat silent, thinking rapidly. I could scrap the passage I had booked by sea back to Australia and fly home through the States, but I should have to wangle a few dollars. A little thing like that wasn't going to stop me. Buy a set of diamond cuff links and sell them in the States, perhaps. . . .

The waiter went away, and Viola said, "I suppose you'll be writing to her now."

I SAID slowly: "I'll do that, but there won't be time to get an answer before I go. I'm booked to leave in a few days. I think I'll go back through the States. I'll be in Seattle in a few days' time, pretty well as soon as my letter."

"I thought you'd probably do that," she said. "Mad as a March hare."

I didn't know what I could say to that without hurting her more, and so we sat in silence for a time. I became aware that I owed Viola a lot. It must have cost her a great deal to give me what she had.

"I'm very grateful to you for all this, Viola," I said clumsily. "I don't

think I'd ever have got in touch with her without your help."

"We were good friends in the war," she muttered, looking down at her plate. "She's had a bad spin since, and I'd like her to be happy."

Instinctively, I sheered away from the difficult subject. "Do you think she'd be happy if she got back into the Wrens?"

She raised her head and stared across the room. "She might. It's difficult to say. She only knew the Wrens in wartime, and it's very different now."

"What she wants is a third World War," I said, half laughing.

That provided us with a safe topic that lasted us right throughout our dinner, till the coffee came and I lit her cigarette. She drank her coffee quickly. "I must go back soon," she said. "I've got some work to do upon a script before tomorrow morning."

I knew that she was making an excuse to cut our meeting short. "This'll have to be goodbye for the time being," I said awkwardly. "I don't know when I'll be in England again."

"Not for some years, I suppose," she said.

I nodded. "I ought to have gone home a year ago. My parents are both getting pretty old, and there's the property to be looked after."

She said, "Maybe that's as well, Alan, for both of us." She ground her half-smoked cigarette out in the ashtray and said, without looking up at me, "Are you going to ask her if she'll marry you?"

"I don't know," I protested. "I may be mad as a March hare, but I'm not as mad as all that. Nine years ago, and only for a few hours then. We'll both have changed. You said that once yourself."

"You'll marry her," she said, "and you'll be very happy together. And I'll send you a wedding present, and stand godmother to one of your kids." She raised her eyes to mine, and they were full of tears. "And now if you don't mind, Alan, I think I'm going home."

SHE got up from the table and went quickly to the door of the little restaurant, and I went with her. In the doorway she turned to me. "Go back and pay the bill," she said. She put out her hand. "This really is goodbye this time, Alan."

I took her hand. "I've done you nothing but harm, Viola," I said, "and you've done me nothing but good. I'm sorry for everything."

She held my hand for an instant. "It wouldn't ever have worked," she said. "I see that now. You're what you are and she would always be between us, even if you never see her again. We're grown-up people; we can part as friends." She let my hand go. "Good luck in Seattle."

"Goodbye, Viola," I said.

She turned away, and I stood in the doorway watching her as she went down the street, irresolute, half minded to go after her and call her back. But presently she turned the corner and was lost to sight, and I went back to pay the bill, sick at heart.

I went back to my flat in Half Moon Street and sat down to write a letter to Janet Prentice. I slept on it, tore it up, wrote it again, slept on it next night, and wrote it a third time. When I was satisfied, I posted it by air mail. I had cut it to about one half of the original length. I reminded her of our meeting in the war and said that while I was in England I had met Viola Dawson, who happened to have her address. As I was flying back to Australia in a week or so, it would hardly be out of my way to come to Seattle to see her, and I would give her a ring as soon as I got in.

It took me a fortnight to re-arrange my passage to Australia by air through the United States and to comply with all the formalities. It was not until October 14 that I finally took off for New York. I was leaving behind me in England a great deal that I admired and valued, but as I settled down into the Stratocruiser's seat I was absurdly and unreasonably happy. Of course I was going home after an

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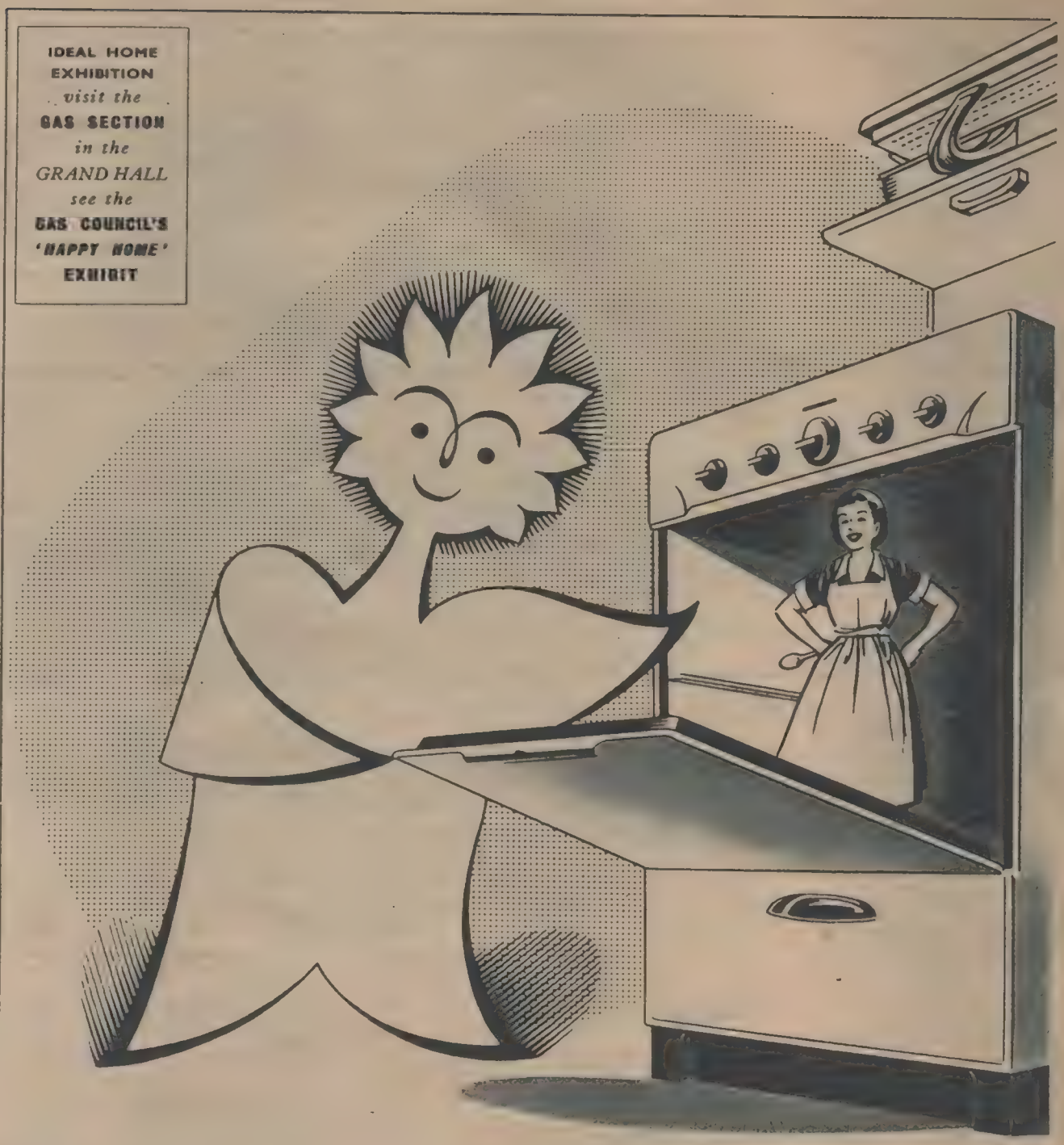

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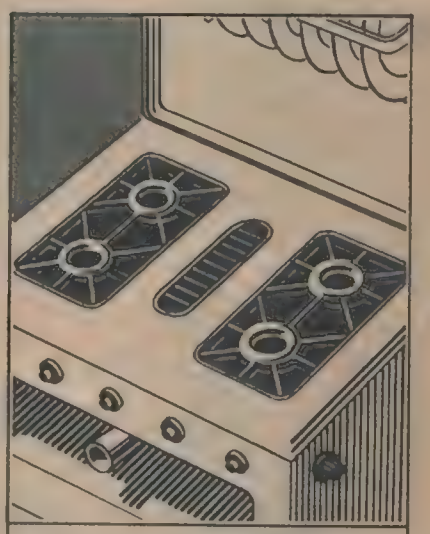

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absence of five years, and that probably accounted for a little part of my elation.

I had one or two friends in New York and I had never been in the United States before, so I went to a hotel and spent three days there, seeing my friends and being entertained and seeing the sights. On the night of the nineteenth I was sitting in a Constellation on my way across the continent to Seattle; we got there in the morning and I checked in at a big hotel on 4th Avenue.

I didn't want to rush at this, so I had a bath and went down to a light lunch in the restaurant. Then I went back up to my room and looked for Prentice in the telephone directory. It was there, all right, with the same address, though the name was Mrs. C. W. Prentice.

I stared at it in thought for a minute. There had been mention of an aunt that she was going to live with. This would be the widow of her uncle, the one who had been on the faculty of Stanford University. Widow, because if the husband had been alive the telephone would have been in his name.

I put the book down presently and sat down on the edge of the bed, and called the number.

A woman's voice answered, with a marked American accent. I said, "Can I speak to Miss Prentice?"

"You've got the wrong number," she replied. "Miss Prentice doesn't live here now."

A sick disappointment came upon me; I had been counting on success this time. "Can you tell me her number?" I asked. And then, feeling that a little explanation was required, I said, "She's expecting me. I'm on my way from England to Australia, and I stopped here in Seattle to see her."

I don't think my explanation impressed the woman very much, because she said, "She left here more than a year back, after the old lady died. We bought the house off her. Did she give you this number?"

"No," I said. "I looked it up in the book."

"You must have got hold of an old book. Did you say she was expecting you?"

"I wrote to her from England a few days ago to say that I'd be passing through Seattle, and I'd ring her up," I explained.

She said: "Wait now. There's a letter came the other day for her from England. I meant to give it to the mailman, and I clean forgot. Just stay there while I go get it." I waited till she came back to the phone. "What did you say your name was?"

"Alan Duncan."

"That's correct," she said. "That's the name written on the back. Your letter's right here, Mr. Duncan."

I asked, "Didn't she leave a forwarding address with you?"

"No, she didn't. A few things came in after she had gone, and we gave them to the mailman."

I thought quickly. There was just a possibility that the woman might know more than I could easily get out of her upon the telephone, or possibly the next-door neighbours might know something that would help me. "It looks as if I've missed her," I said. "I think the best thing I can do is to come out and collect that letter."

"Sure," she said affably. "I'll be glad to meet you, Mr. Duncan. I never met an Englishman from England."

I laughed. "You've not met one now. I'm Australian. Would it be all right if I come out this afternoon?"

"Surely," she said. "Come right out. The name's Pasmanik—Mrs. Molly Pasmanik."

I drove out in a taxi half an hour later. It was quite a long way out of town, a small single-storey house in a district known as North Beach. I spent an hour with Mrs. Pasmanik, but she really knew very little that was of any use to me. The neighbours on the one side had left two months before my visit, and on the other side had come shortly before Janet had sold the house, and they knew nothing of her. The aunt had died in May, 1952, and the Pasmaniks had bought the house from Janet in June. They had not seen much of her as the business had been handled by an agent.

Mrs. Pasmanik had an idea, however, that she was going down to San Francisco to live there. She thought the post office would have a forwarding address. The aunt had been cremated and the urn had been deposited in a cemetery at Acacia Park.

There was nothing more to be done there. I said goodbye to Mrs. Pasmanik and walked slowly three or four blocks up the street to the bus that would take me back to town.

I sat in my hotel bedroom that evening brooding over my problem, which seemed now to be as far from a solution as it had ever been. Janet Prentice had disappeared into a foreign country, one of a hundred and fifty million people.

But there were still a few faint threads to be followed up that might possibly lead to her. I went and saw the British vice-consul in the morning; he knew of her existence but thought she had returned to England. I went to the head post office and saw a young man in the postmaster's department, who told me that it was against the rules to give out forwarding addresses and suggested that I should write a letter to the last known address, when it would be forwarded if any forwarding address existed.

I hired a car after lunch and went out to the cemetery and talked to the janitor, who showed me the urn containing the ashes of the late Mrs. Prentice and told me that the urn had been endowed in perpetuity at the time of the funeral. I had hoped that annual charges of some sort would be payable which might lead to an address, but there was nothing of that sort.

With that I had shot my bolt in Seattle, but there remained one faint hope of contact in America. I flew down to San Francisco next morning and got a room in the St. Francis Hotel. That afternoon I got a car and drove out to the beautiful Leland Stanford University, and called on the Registrar as a start, who passed me to the Dean.

He remembered Dr. Robert Prentice, an Englishman who had joined the faculty about the year 1925 and had worked with the Food Research Institute; he had left Stanford about seven years later to take up an appointment with the University of Washington at Seattle, where he had died about the year 1940. They had no records that would help to trace his niece. I thanked them, and went back to the hotel.

That evening I booked a reservation for the flight across the Pacific to Sydney. I had followed a dream for five years and it had got me nowhere. Now I must put away the fancies that I had been following and, as Viola had once remarked, stop behaving like a teen-ager. I was a grown man, nearly forty, and there was work for me to do at Coombargana, my own place.

I dined that night in a restaurant at Fishermans Wharf looking out upon the boats as they rocked on the calm water of the harbour. I must put away childish things and get down to a real job of work. I was content to do so, now that it was all over. I knew that I should never quite forget Janet Prentice, but that evening I felt as though a load had slipped down to the ground from off my shoulders.

To be continued next week

Consider your verdict

In the case on page 34, the judge said that the thief, having acquired no right or title to the coat, was unable to pass on a right to possess it against the true owner. The title to the coat was tainted, and Leonora's honesty could not prevail over that. Jane won her case.

"Could you ring me back later, Jean? I'd love to chat, but this is my lunch hour"

LEONARDO AND THE GIFT OF HEAVEN

Continued from page 17

she would draw the blanket back and smile softly at the sleeping child.

As they passed a wine shop, Leonardo paused and gazed into the window. Most of the brightly coloured labels on the bottles which were stacked neatly in pyramids were unfamiliar to him. Bitterly he thought of his decision that morning: that it was better to buy a blanket for the child than a bottle of brandy. It had not been an easy decision. Leonardo fingered the carefully counted money in his trousers pocket—the exact amount of their fare on the bus to Puerto. There was nothing more; and Jaime, his brother-in-law, would expect a bottle of brandy for the celebration that evening. Jaime and his idea of how things should be done. Leonardo turned from the window.

"We must hurry, Leonardo," his wife urged. "The bus may leave early today." And they climbed the long, steep hill to the Via Roma, Rosario steadfastly refusing his offers to relieve her of the child along the way.

There were no chickens for the Puerto bus that day, but there was a suckling pig which Leonardo and several other passengers helped Tonio place on top. It squealed loudly, but once it was safely wedged in a corner of the luggage rack it quietened down.

"He will ride like a general up there," said Tonio, accepting a cigarette from the owner of the pig.

"But take care when we come to the curves at Pagera, Tonio," said the owner. "We must not lose the little one—it is for a family fiesta."

"Do I tell you how to run your business?" inquired Tonio. "Trust in God, amigo."

LEONARDO was glad that the pig had stopped squealing. He was not sure why the persistent cries had made him uneasy. He had often helped at the butchering of a pig, once even wielding the knife. He looked over at Rosario, his wife, and suddenly his thoughts became soft and he felt a catch in his throat.

She was standing beside an ample-bosomed señora whose many children milled about them. The calm self-assurance of the señora as she scolded and disciplined the unruly ones was in strong contrast to the shy, almost virginal Rosario. Her voice was strident and yet relaxed at the same time—as though there were no real effort in managing such a brood. She turned to speak to Rosario, and Leonardo saw his wife lift the blanket and heard the señora exclaim over the appearance of the child. Leonardo felt proud that something of his flesh and blood should create such interest.

"Maria Dolores," said Leonardo, forming the child's name on his lips.

He would have liked to be taking his wife and his new child home to a family, to a mother—his or Rosario's—who would make much of the child, who would spoil her and indulge her; but he knew that was impossible.

Leonardo walked over to the door of the bus and stopped beside his wife.

"Are you tired?" he asked.

"Yes. But soon we shall be home."

There was a stir among the waiting crowd when Tonio stepped out from the terminal, carrying the leather pouch containing the mail for Puerto, and lit the cigar which he drew from his pocket. Although there were "No Smoking" signs in both the terminal and the Puerto bus, no one, least of all the driver, paid any attention to them. When Tonio lit up the new long cigar, sufficient for most of the journey to Puerto, it was as good a portent as the ringing of a bell that the bus was about to depart.

THE passengers crowded into the bus, scrambling over the long seats that stretched from one side to the other. Soon, every place had been filled, except one beside Leonardo. By mutual consent and the dictation of Tonio, the long seat behind the driver had been left for Leonardo, Rosario and the child.

Now the tip of Tonio's cigar glowed redly and clouds of smoke began to billow from his mouth as he took his place behind the wheel. With much waving of hands and shouted goodbyes to those who had come to see their friends off, with a stuttering and complaining from the well-tried Chevrolet, the journey began.

Slowly the bus climbed the remainder of the hill on the Via Roma, rounded the statue to the hero of some forgotten war, and headed for the suburbs and the main road to Puerto. But hardly were they outside the capital city when the bus was halted.

Tonio had no choice in the matter. As he came down the main street of Terreno, a taxi driver jumped into the middle of the road and frantically waved his arms. Tonio brought the bus to a stop.

"How dare you interfere with the transport system of Spain?" shouted Tonio. "I have a schedule to maintain. Get out of the way."

"I have a passenger for you," said the taxi driver.

"He should have come to the terminal as the rest of my passengers do," said Tonio.

"He was not well enough," replied the taxi driver.

"In that case," said Tonio, his anger moderating, "bring him along."

Tonio climbed down from the bus and, together with the driver, moved a staggering figure from the taxi and deposited him in the seat next to Leonardo.

"He is not sick," said Tonio. "He has had too much brandy."

"That is so," said the taxi driver, and he handed Tonio a fifty-peseta note. "The Americano asked me to

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give you this. It is an affair of the heart—a señorita awaits him in Puerto."

"Ah, that is another matter," said Tonio, pocketing the note and starting up the bus once again.

When viewed through Mallorquin eyes, it was a fantastic figure who was sprawled beside Leonardo. The Americano's shirt was a bright red and white check, his trousers a faded green, and on his head he wore one of the brightly coloured hats that are sold in the capital city to the tourists. At his feet had been placed a loaded shopping-bag.

But if his dress was unusual, his action, once he was safely placed in the bus, was entirely appropriate to the country: he promptly went to sleep.

Except for intermittent mutterings, the Americano slept soundly and well—his snoring a soft comfortable tone, barely audible above the rattle of the windows, the roar of the motor, and the shouted conversation of the busload of passengers. Leonardo, after his first curiosity had been satisfied, returned to his thoughts.

It was of Jaime, his wife's brother, that Leonardo found himself thinking. He was a proud man, this brother-in-law, a man who had prospered. As an artisan, he had an unspoken scorn for a man such as Leonardo, who worked in the fields. He had been trained as a shoemaker and, in the short time since he had set up shop in Puerto, had gained more customers than he was able to take care of. Already, Jaime was beginning to talk of hiring an apprentice. But it was not his brother-in-law's prosperity that worried Leonardo; rather it was his own inability—especially when he worked with the single-bladed plough—to keep up with Jaime's ideas of what should be done.

Leonardo knew, since Jaime did not keep his ideas to himself, that he, as a new father, was expected to provide at least a bottle of brandy for the family fiesta that evening. And Leonardo had made provision for this: he had set aside thirty pesetas. What devil, then, had persuaded him that morning to buy a blanket for the child rather than the bottle of brandy?

SUDDENLY, as when his plough struck a stone in the ground and his burro strained to be free, Leonardo felt a sharp wrench and knew again the pain of loneliness. To be without those who witness and partake of one's dreams—the innumerable cousins, the uncles and aunts, the indulgent mother, the proud father and grandfather—that, for the Spaniard, is the worst that can happen to a man. He looked over at Rosario, who, even in her sleep, was cradling the child safely in her arms, and the feeling only became stronger. She, too, was without antecedents, without witnesses. They were alone, and had always been.

Both of them had been thrown up as jetsam from the tragic whirlpool of the civil war: Leonardo in Madrid after the fall of that city—a child searching for scraps of food in the trenches of the now quiet streets; Rosario, along with her brother, in a farmer's barn outside the capital city of Mallorca. All three had become public charges: Leonardo in one of the orphanages of the Order of San Paulo, Rosario and Jaime in a foster home.

Because the city and its attendant noises reminded him of the aeroplanes and the other sounds of war, Leonardo had chosen to be trained for work in the country, among the green and growing things. It was only when he came to Mallorca, with its rich soil and year-round work, and had married Rosario, that the sense of aloneness had receded. But it had always been there—ready to reassert itself whenever there was need to prove their birth or even their right to the name they bore. And now it was with Leonardo again—as in the streets of Madrid, as in the orphanage.

His glance fell on the basket of the Americano. It was on the floor where the taxi driver had placed it, but he had not wedged it securely and it had fallen on its side. The bottles with which it was filled rested uneasily in it.

It was only as one of the bottles, propelled by the motion of the bus, began to slide out of the basket that Leonardo saw the label. Slowly and with the greatest difficulty he spelled out the name: WHISKY. He remembered an American moving-picture he had seen. In that they spoke often of "whisky" and drank many glasses of it, especially at fiestas. Leonardo leaned back in his seat. The Americano continued to sleep. The bottle slid forward ever so slightly.

It is after the stop at Pagera that the road begins to climb the mountain of Aldea, the twistings and turnings become continuous, and Tonio concentrates on his driving. At this point, the owner of the pig began to shout: "Take care here, Tonio. Remember the little one on top."

But Tonio did not reply; he clamped down with his teeth on the cigar and turned the big wheel as best he could.

The bottle of whisky seemed determined to escape from the basket. Leonardo watched, completely absorbed, and then gradually took part in the game. With a mere flick of his foot, he found that he could guide the errant bottle along its way. It was something to help pass the time and keep his thoughts from the morbid turn they had taken.

FINALLY the idea came to him—so persistent that it would not be dismissed from his mind. Why not? Leonardo asked himself. God provides these things, and it is not every day that a man brings his wife and new child home from the capital city, and it is not every man who has such a brother-in-law. Leonardo decided that to pick the bottle up would be stealing. But if the Americano got off the bus and left the bottle behind, then surely it would belong to whoever discovered it? Soon the bottle was nestled securely under his feet.

And now the bus was travelling along the last stretch of road before Puerto, a dusty patch, and large billowing clouds rose behind the moving vehicle, warning those who were waiting in Puerto of its imminent arrival. Slowly the ancient Chevrolet negotiated the last kilometre, lumbered down the Calle Sotelo and came to a stop at the Café Colón. The passengers began to leave the bus. Tonio had awakened the Americano and, as he got out, Leonardo noticed the pretty señorita who waited for him.

"Come, Leonardo," said Rosario, getting up from her seat. "Look, here is Jaime waiting for us."

"My foot is asleep," said Leonardo elaborately. "I will wait a minute and then join you." But he was not looking at Rosario. Up the road he could see the Americano walking arm-in-arm with the young señorita. And the basket with the bottles of whisky was still on the floor of the bus. . . .

Rosario had joined her brother and was proudly showing him the baby. Somehow Jaime did not appear so formidable in the flesh as he had been in Leonardo's thoughts. Leonardo's mind was made up. He picked up the basket, first replacing the bottle that had rolled under his feet, climbed out of the bus and ran after the Americano.

"Señor, señor," he shouted and, catching up with him, placed the basket in his hand.

There was a confused moment until the Americano recognized the property as his own. But even though the Americano's Spanish was not the best, Leonardo was able to understand his next action and the words that accompanied it. Taking one of the bottles from the basket, he placed it in Leonardo's hand.

"*Gracias, amigo,*" the Americano said, and hurried off with the señorita, leaving Leonardo standing in the road.

"The ways of God are strange," said Leonardo, thinking of the toasts he would propose that evening to the future of his daughter Maria Dolores. And turning to join Rosario and his brother-in-law, he added: "But, then, it is not every day that the head of a family goes to the capital city to bring home his wife and new child." THE END

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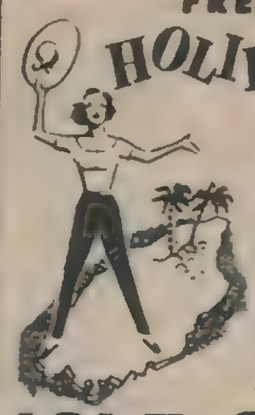

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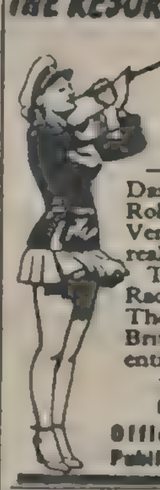

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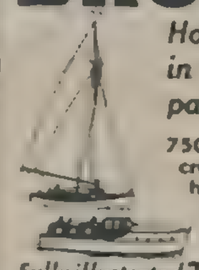

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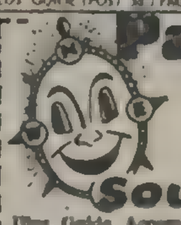

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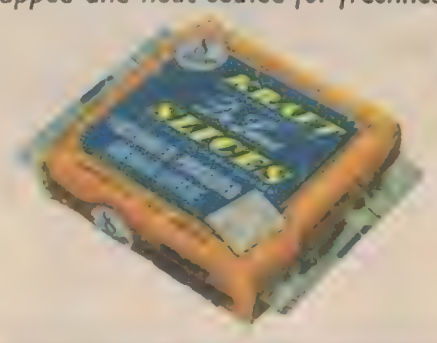

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THE KILLING SANDS

Continued from page 21

of being told about it a quarter of an hour later—but, there, we are so often wise after the event.

While she was out there, I had stuffed my pipe, picked up a book, and started to read in a lazy fashion. For a while her muffled voice reached me. After that, I heard her moving about upstairs. It was eight o'clock when she came back into the room, dressed to go out. I had a suspicion that she had been crying. Her mouth was too controlled to be natural.

I said: "What's the matter?"

"Nothing."

I smiled. "As an elderly pokenose, my dear, I don't believe you. I'm almost your uncle. Won't you tell me?"

Her lips moved, and she said in an impulsive outburst: "It's just about the limit! What difference could half an hour have made?"

"What's it all about?"

"That call was from Alan. They've been loading hay all day. He said they'd finished only a few minutes back. Considering he'd promised he'd be here by quarter past. . . ."

I said gently: "Don't be too angry. I think I'd have put the hay first, even if I'd been in love with a girl as pretty as you. The weather's breaking."

Her eyes had a glint. "Would you? It's a matter of opinion."

"Hard luck missing the beginning of the picture. But he should be here by quarter to nine, if he steps on it."

She said: "Wait a minute. You haven't heard it all. I pointed out that if he jumped on his push-bike and pedalled hard across the sands, we'd still be in time. The tide's out, and he could do it in about half an hour. And he actually said. . . ." She stopped, her lips trembling. "And he actually said, that with the weather breaking, it was too risky."

I glanced out at the bay. It had vanished behind trailing cloud. I was on the point of saying: "So it is," when she made a curious, scornful little gesture, and went on:

"As if a drop of rain would do him any harm! I told him flatly that if he couldn't bike over tonight, he needn't bother to come here again, ever. So he said he'd start at once, and rang off." Her throat quivered. "But the evening's ruined."

I scarcely took in that last sentence of hers. I was on my feet, staring at her.

"D'you realize what you've done? Rain? What does he care about rain? It's not that!" I thrust out my hand at the veiling cloud. "There'll be no landmark to give him the line. Scar Edge has disappeared. If he gets into those quicksands on this side of the Crail. . . ."

ALL the anger and hurt pride drained out of her in the instant. She stared back at me, appalled. She said: "Oh, please God, forgive me."

I put my hands on her shoulders. "You weren't to guess. And maybe he's all right. But I'd better go down at once, out on the sands. For the first mile or more this side it's dead safe. Can you lend me a bike?"

She got a grip of herself somehow. She said: "There's Father's. And I've got one. I'm coming with you."

"We'd better take a rope, in case. . . ."

"The bikes are in the garage." She was running out of the room. "Have a look at the tyres while I fetch a clothes line."

We left in a fine drizzle, pedalling fast. It was all I could do to keep up with her. After the first flattish half-mile between fields there was that long, steady descent to the coast, and we went swooping down through rain that grew heavier. With the idea of comforting her, I jerked out a few remarks, that he knew the crossing well, that he had a sensible head on his shoulders, that at any moment we might meet him plugging up the slope from the shore. Privately, I looked at my watch, and told myself that unless we really did meet him soon, then tragedy would be likely, for he had had reasonable time to reach the north shore.

We came to the end of the road where it splays out into a kind of natural parking ground, popular with motorists at holiday time. From here a track cuts down at a shallow angle between the low cliffs. The beach below is of soft sand for thirty yards or more. Across this we had to wheel our bikes. The rain was driving in our faces, and I reckoned visibility at about four hundred yards. Though I had walked the crossing several times, I was far from confident of keeping a straight course. Still, there were small, infrequent juttings of weedy rock, and they helped as guiding marks.

The firm, wet sand was beneath us. As Jill mounted her bike, she said with awful steadiness: "We should have met him by now. But I won't stop hoping."

I could give no answer to that. She was cycling level with me, and while I pedalled at half speed, she kept saying: "Come on! Oh, come on!"

I said, almost harshly: "Listen to me, and do as you're told. Pretty soon we'll be near the quicksands. If we come on them suddenly while we're pedalling like lunatics, we'll be no help to Alan or anybody else."

She gulped, and answered: "I'm sorry."

"What's more, you're going to keep behind me. Five yards at least. If my wheels sink in suddenly, jab on your brakes in the instant."

From then onwards I kept ahead of her, straining my eyes for a glimpse of the bed of the Crail. Our world was confined to a narrow flatness of dank sand, tiny runnels, and a tapestry of rain. Beneath the murmur of it crept another sound, the slow hissing of foam. A fringe of feathery whiteness slid into being, and our tyres were cutting through a film of water. The tide had turned. The sight of these spreading ripples might have been an ugly shock, but for the fact that I knew the nature of the tide in Grizewell Bay. For two hours after low water it forms scarcely more than a vast paddling pool, maybe a foot deep. In the next four, it develops into a swiftly rising swirl.

Peering at the seeping wateriness in front, I caught sight of something blurred marking its surface. At this extreme range of vision, it might have been a rock. But it seemed to be moving slightly. Then Jill made a choked sound, and cycled past me, desperately, the spray shooting up from her wheels.

I bawled at her with all the power of my lungs, ordering her to slow down, and pedalled after her. The blur I was watching had changed to the shape of a man's head and shoulders. The rest of Alan was engulfed in the quicksand.

I drew level with her, grabbed her shoulder, jammed on my brakes.

"Get off that bike! D'you hear me?" I shouted almost savagely. "We're near the fringe. We must be. Get off and walk."

She gave me one pleading look, and obeyed. I took the rope, left the bikes lying in the water and, treading cautiously in front of her, made towards Alan. His wet face had the whiteness of exhaustion. His hands and arms were spread forward in the vain hope of supporting his weight, and the shallow tide eddied around them. He called out her name, and his voice had no strength. His battle with that hideous suction must have well-nigh drained him.

TWENTY yards from him I felt the warning softness of the quicksand quiver beneath my feet. The sloppy sucking of it brought me out in a cold sweat. I jumped back, held the coil in my right hand, the loose end in the left, gauged the distance, and sent the rope snaking at him. It slapped the water immediately by his arms, and he grabbed it.

Jill was standing by me, crying out words of encouragement to him. Her eyes were bright with relief, for she imagined we would have him safe in a matter of seconds. I dared not tell her of my own dread, that so much of him was held by those tenacious sands, our pulling might be futile.

I said: "Keep behind me. Dig in your heels. Rope round your waist. That's it." My fingers had locked in a grip on it. "Now—a steady pull."

Somewhere in the blind distance a gull screamed, and it seemed a note of mockery, for our pulling hardly moved him an inch. I gritted my teeth and arched my back, and behind me, Jill was gasping with a passion of effort. But the sands refused to part with him, and soon, inevitably, his grip weakened and the rope jerked out of his hands.

Without any warning, Jill darted past me, as if she could defy the sands and wrap her arms around him and drag him out of the very mouth of death. Half a dozen plunging steps she took, and clawed at the air, her feet beginning to sink. I craned forward, seized her by the collar of her mac, and wrenched her backwards. For moments she struggled, poor child, crazy in her purpose to reach Alan.

I said: "My dear, for his sake, you've got to be sensible. You've got to be brave. He knows he hasn't much chance now. Don't make it worse for him."

Shivering words came from her. "D'you think I can stand here and do nothing? D'you thing I can watch him going down and down till . . . ?" Her throat choked.

It was hard to find any answer. I remained holding her arms in my grip, for fear she should make another

It's The Custom . . . in HAMPSTEAD

A player scores. Pell Mell has been played here for three centuries

The royal and ancient game of Pell Mell

IN the garden of the Freemason's Arms, an inn overlooking Hampstead Heath, London, the fifty members of the Hampstead Lawn Billiards and Skittle Club meet to preserve an ancient tradition. "As far as we know," says John Potten, a company director and the secretary of the club, "we are the only players of Pell Mell left in the world."

Potten has received inquiries about the game from Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Americans from the London embassy have come to the Freemason's Arms to learn it.

Pell Mell is known in Hampstead as lawn billiards. It is played on a court shaped like a keyhole. A grassed rectangle runs into a circle of some forty feet diameter. The outer part of this circle is gravelled, and slopes away to the edge. In the centre is a round, flat table of wooden blocks about fifteen feet across. And right in the middle of this table is an upright iron ring, set on a sunken swivel.

In the singles game, each player has two eight-pound balls; in a doubles game, one. "You have to scoop up your ball with a cue—a pole four feet in length with a metal ring on the end—and hurl it towards the iron ring," says John Potten. "If it passes through the ring, you score."

The balls are made of lignum vitae, one of the hardest of woods. Play begins from the end of the rectangle farthest from the ring, and it usually takes competent players about twenty minutes to finish a game. If the weather is kind, the first games of 1955 will be played this month.

"As in golf and tennis, the secret is to combine a good follow-through with a sharp eye," says John Paine, a solicitor. "The balls are only one-eighth of an inch smaller than the ring, and the ring spins easily on its swivel. So the throw must be exact."

Pell Mell can be a very exciting game. "An experienced player will knock his opponent's ball on to the sloping gravel," says Paine, "or leave the swivel ring at an awkward angle for him."

Pell Mell as it is known today is a variant of a game introduced into England from France in the seventeenth century. It was originally known as Paille Maille and played with a mallet, and it flourished during the reign of Charles II.

"The game was played by members of the Royal Family, and it gave its name to two famous London streets near St. James's Palace, the Mall and Pall Mall," says Bernard Levy, licensee of the Freemason's Arms since 1932.

Levy's inn at Hampstead was rebuilt in 1936, but it has a long history. "There was certainly a Freemason's Arms here in the seventeenth century," he says, "and Pell Mell has been played in the garden for nearly three hundred years."

"Today we have players of all ages and occupations," says John Potten. "We have old age pensioners, doctors, an aircraft designer, a master butcher, a bookstall attendant, an engineer and a dentist. One of our best players is Freddie Pyle. At eighty-six, he throws the eight-pound ball with no trouble at all."

What's it like—the first time you fly solo?

This young Royal Air Force pilot tells you

"We'd done our usual quota of circuits and bumps, and then the instructor stopped the aircraft and began undoing his safety straps. 'O.K. — it's all yours,' he said. 'Pick me up over there when you come in.' I felt a little nervous for a moment, then I took a grip of myself, told myself I was going to be all right and got on with the drill. Cockpit check: all clear behind and ahead: turn into the wind. I opened up the throttle, kept her straight on the rudder and eased the stick forward. I felt the tail come up and then, with a glance at my speed, I eased the stick back gently . . . then I was airborne. Take her up steadily I told myself and don't try to rush things. It wasn't till I turned across wind and climbed up to circuit height that I realised it was actually *me*—flying solo! I almost forgot to level out and turn downwind. Not a very good turn either — I could almost hear the instructor saying a few words about sideslipping. But I was beginning to enjoy myself up there on my own. I looked down at the airfield and began to judge when to turn. 'When the field seems to pass under your wing-tip,' that's what the instructor always said. So I turned, cut back the throttle, trimmed to glide and then turned into wind. I found I was undershooting so I put on some power to take me in—just a little burst. And then the actual levelling out and landing—you have to watch the field and judge your height. When I thought I was just right I eased back on the stick, floated a bit, then brought it right back—'right into your tummy,' my instructor used to say—and landed. A little heavy but a genuine three-pointer, and I felt quite pleased with myself. Almost forgot that I hadn't finished and still had to keep her straight. But I controlled it and then took a deep breath as I taxied back to pick up the instructor and hear what he had to say about it all. He didn't say much as a matter of fact, just—'Well, that wasn't too bad'—so I knew I was all right. I suppose it's pretty easy really, but I can tell you I felt on top of the world."

Would you like to know more about life in the Royal Air Force? The table below gives brief details of the kinds of flying commissions that are available.

METHOD OF ENTRY	AGE LIMITS	EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS
Cranwell Cadetship	17½—19	*Civil Service Commission Examination*
Direct Commission	17½—26	*General Certificate of Education, Scottish Leaving Certificate or equivalent*
From a University	20—26	*Normal degree at recognised University*
*National Service**	*During Service*	*General Certificate of Education Scottish Leaving Certificate or equivalent*

**For subsequent service with the R.Aux. A.F.*

For fuller information write to:—Under Secretary of State, Air Ministry (J.B.212), Adastral House M.R.2, London, W.C.2

THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

attempt that could only end in her being the second victim.

"Let me go! Let me go!" She was fighting to free herself. "I've killed him, and I don't want to live!"

"Jill, he can hear you. He knows what's happening. I say again, don't make it worse for him."

By some immense effort of spirit she quietened herself. I drew in the rope, coiled it, and flung it back to him. Not that I had any hope of a second attempt succeeding. The first failure was final. But to do something, no matter how futile, was the only course.

One of his cold, groping hands caught the rope. Afraid to look at Jill, I said: "Just take the strain. That's all. If we pull hard, he'll lose his hold."

In that next phase it came upon me that we were acting in a nightmare, too cruel, too slowly merciless to be true. With the tide lapping around our ankles, we held that rope in the knowledge that presently, by fractions of an inch, Alan was going to sink out of sight for ever beneath the water and the sand.

He was getting weaker. His face had a weary dullness. His extended arms, beneath the water, must have been numbed. The tide flowed slyly, a little way below his raised chin. I found myself asking why this tragedy had to be, why he should have been allowed to get so near to safety, only to die like this. Could he have found firm sand or rock under his outstretched arms, it would have given him the leverage to help our pulling.

It was Jill who saw the chance. Maybe her thoughts had been similar to mine. She said swiftly: "Hold on! I believe. . . ."

She was dashing back to where the water washed around the cycles. I watched her tear open a tool-bag at the back of her saddle. She snatched out a couple of tyre spanners, loosened the valve of the front wheel, extracted the inner tube in a kind of cool frenzy. Soon she had the tube from the rear wheel. Then she was pumping them up, and running back to me with them. There was no need for her to explain. She had created hope, a chance out of nothing.

I called: "Alan, let go! In a minute you're going to make one great effort. For Jill's sake, remember."

The rope slipped out of his fingers. I knotted the end of it around the two tubes and flung them back to him.

"Get them under your arms! Lean on them! Grip the rope!"

WITH hope there flared up in him the ebbing sparks of strength. He pulled the tubes over his head, rested his chest and elbows on them. They dipped in the water, but the air in them was lending him leverage and buoyancy.

Jill said through her teeth: "He shan't die!" And then the rope had gone taut, and we were heaving until our bodies and arms grew fiery.

Alan was moving. In the beginning, I feared to believe it. But when my straightened legs took a tiny pace backwards, doubt became shining truth. And with every dragging inch it grew easier. At last his legs were coming free, and we pulled him towards us over the tide-washed softness.

I picked him up in my arms and splashed over to the cycles.

"We'll put him on your father's. Yours will be no use."

We sat him on the saddle and, supporting him on either side, started wheeling him through the murk and rain towards the shore, while the slow tide flowed a little higher above our ankles. We had a full hour to spare, and we were safe.

I glanced across the handlebars at Jill. She was wet through, exhausted, and yet she was radiant.

I said: "My dear, you look——"

"I don't know how I look." She smiled up at Alan. Young and strong and resilient, he was recovering his vitality, and he conjured up a smile in return.

"You look like an angel," he said. He said it quite simply and sincerely as a man might who has looked at death. THE END

A CURE FOR SERPENTS

Continued from page 15

my bedroom. Of course, she had taken no notice when Jemberié and Omar had entered: great ladies did not notice servants—and in any case, at that moment she was far away from them, far away in time and space. She saw again her human form, lived the days when her son was small and at her side.

Jemberié was convinced from that moment, and he began to treat Neghesti with the utmost respect. He placed a mirror in her cage, sprayed her every day with my hair lotion, and opened doors for her with great deference.

Lioness Stayed On Bed

Neghesti was already adult when I awoke one morning with my tonsils swollen and inflamed. A fever developed, and as I began to shiver from head to foot, Neghesti sprang on to my bed and refused to leave it. Omar called her, entreated her, and when he tried to push her off the bed she showed her teeth in a savage growl. Jemberié, who was present, led Omar away and sent him to tell Eleonora that I was ill.

As soon as Eleonora entered the room, Neghesti ran to her and looked at her with an expression of such desperate anxiety that Eleonora took the lioness in her arms and whispered words of comfort. Neghesti licked her face and then returned to the bed, resting her nose on my shoulder.

When a young doctor friend came to see me, he stopped dead on the threshold. Neghesti, deciding that I needed protection, had lain down on top of me, with my head between her paws, and was glaring at those around me in a threatening manner.

"How do you feel?" asked the doctor tentatively.

"Awful," I said. "I've got a fever."

"Well what d'you expect me to do . . . with a lioness on your bed?"

But Neghesti would not budge. Omar's calls, Eleonora's entreaties all left her unmoved. She fixed her eyes on the doctor, and when anyone tried to remove her, she emitted a low roar which reverberated through my chest.

Eventually, hardly able to stand because of the fever, I was obliged to put on a dressing-gown and slippers and go out into the garden. Neghesti followed me like a dog, allowed herself to be shut in her cage, and let out a desperate wail as I left her.

The next day, however, they had to bring her back to my room because she refused to eat, and only when she was beside my bed, having re-assured herself that I was still alive, did she decide to put her nose into her dish of raw meat and eat. I was in bed for a week, and during the whole of that time Neghesti lived, slept and ate at my bedside.

Bad News Shocked Me

The months passed. One afternoon I was alone in my sitting-room with Neghesti when Jemberié entered, bringing me a letter on a tray. The letter came from far away, and it was written in large handwriting on blue notepaper. It announced that someone dear to me had committed suicide.

The news was a profound shock, and for a while I sat in a dazed and numbed reverie. It was this that prevented me from noticing Neghesti's furious nudges. Finding me so absorbed in my thoughts, she stood up at the side of my armchair and began to ruffle my hair with her nose and paws. I pushed her away roughly, and remained with my elbows on my knees, looking into space.

I do not know how long I stayed like that, but at a certain point I heard the door of the sitting-room open and, raising my eyes, I found a small, awe-struck group of servants in the doorway. For a moment, no one said anything. Then Jemberié, seeing the letter which had fallen to the floor, asked: "Bad news?"

I nodded automatically and then after a moment, surprised, I asked him how he knew. The sound of my voice

WHO'S WHO?

They look alike, but their lives have been very different. From the details below, can you provide each woman with her potted biography — and her name? The answers are on page 44.

BORN:
- A. Twenty-nine years ago in Bermuda, daughter of an American playwright.
- B. Twenty-four years ago in Hampstead, London, daughter of an advertising agent.

FIRST JOB:
- C. Acting on New York radio.
- D. A two-line "bit" part.

HAS SAID:
- E. "I am very happy to take my husband's nationality."
- F. "Mr. Chaplin is a great man with great ideals."

FAMOUS AS:
- G. An inspiration to one of the world's greatest film artists.
- H. One of Britain's most sensitive actresses.

---

broke the spell, and they all came forward together talking and gesticulating in the direction of Neghesti who had entered behind them.

It seemed that while they were all in the pantry adjoining the kitchen, each about his business, Neghesti had leapt in through the window and, lashing her tail like one possessed, had thrust them all towards the door, with her head and her shoulders. She preceded them across the dining-room but, seeing that they were hesitating, she returned and hustled them towards the door which led to the sitting-room.

When we were alone, Jemberié remarked in a hushed voice that obviously the "Signora" had suffered unbearably at the sight of her son's distress; she had not known what to do to console him and had, therefore, called the servants. Jemberié then left the room, bowing his head respectfully as he passed in front of the lioness.

Some while later, I had to return to Italy. But what about Neghesti? I could not leave her in Asmara, and even though the journey did not present any difficulty, I did not see how I could keep a lioness in an Italian hotel or in a flat without a garden. Neither did the idea of presenting her to the Zoological Gardens attract me.

Neghesti was in the room when I told Jemberié that I would be leaving next month and that I did not know what to do with her. She laid her head on my knees and looked into my face with eyes the like of which I have never seen in any other animal. Jemberié threw me a significant glance, but said nothing. Later, when we were alone, he remarked very seriously: "Not speaking when Signora listening. Yesterday Omar saying bad word and she hitting so hard his middle with her head so he falling down."

Servant Wept Loudly

The days slipped by. Open trunks stood about in the hall and lent a depressing air of imminent departure. One morning, I awoke and realized that in five days' time I must leave. Sitting up in bed, I smoked and turned over in my mind every possible solution to the problem of the lioness.

Suddenly Omar burst into my room and threw himself on his knees at the bedside, weeping loudly. Neghesti, he cried, was dead.

The news was so unexpected that I was struck dumb. Neghesti dead? But she had been in excellent health the evening before. She had stayed in the kitchen until ten o'clock; Omar had given her a nice piece of raw meat together with the bones of the previous day's beefsteaks which the cook had kept for her. She had eaten with excellent appetite and after a short run in the garden had gone to her cage and had fallen asleep immediately, under Omar's eyes. He had found her in exactly the same position in the morning—but dead.

At the foot of the pepper tree which opened its umbrella over the flowerbed in front of the house, Omar dug a deep pit, and in the evening he laid the body of the lioness in the grave, and Jemberié covered it with earth. Before he began putting the earth back, I saw Jemberié throw a silver Coptic cross down into the grave. The cook saw it too, and with her thumb she made the sign of the Cross.

Patient Was A Prince

About a year later I returned to Africa, this time to Ethiopia as *chef-du-cabinet* to the viceroy in Addis Ababa. But once a doctor always a doctor, and happily I was still occasionally called to practise my profession. One day, therefore, when I received an urgent summons from a sick man, I answered it at once. This turned out to be a very imprudent move, for never did any patient so harass me with tenacious affection and esteem, or so torment me with remorseless gratitude.

My patient was a bronze-skinned Abyssinian prince, tall and lean and of a most stern countenance. When I made his acquaintance, he must have been over seventy. His movements were lithe and quick; his hair, moustache and goatee beard were dyed black; and when he smiled he displayed a dazzling set of false teeth. He was courteous, violent, overbearing or obsequious according to the circumstances and company; his swift changes of attitude and expression were those of the descendant of a long line of autocrats.

I had already met him on several occasions at official ceremonies. We had to converse through an interpreter who was as round as a barrel, wore a perennial smile and sweated profusely in all seasons. Once, when they were both in my office, he had explained to his master that I was also a doctor. The prince's enthusiasm knew no bounds: he insisted on embracing me and I had no choice but to submit.

A month later, the interpreter called on me. With the most joyful of smiles he told me that his master was dying and wished to see me before he breathed his last.

In the prince's room, I found a decrepit old man in a gold-embroidered cloak; he took me by the hand and led me to a bed from which came the sound of laboured breathing.

The prince was naked except for a *futa* over his legs. He was half sitting and was supported by a girl who, curled up on the bed, served as a bolster for him. Another girl held his head up, while a third and a fourth massaged his forearms vigorously, as though they were kneading bread.

Heard Mumbled Prayer

The prince was the colour of lead. Great drops of sweat ran slowly down his cheeks, and the girl he was leaning against wiped them continuously with a cloth. I heard the sound of invisible people moving about in the dark corners of the room—a woman's sobbing, a cough, a mumbled prayer. An infant with a pear-shaped head appeared for an instant at my feet, gave me a meaningless smile and disappeared under the bed.

The old man in the gold cloak told me that the prince had been ill for some days, that he had a violent cough and a high fever. I persuaded the patient to lie down, and substituted a couple of cushions for the girls, but the masseuses transferred their attentions from their master's arms to his legs and feet, and continued their manipulations during the entire examination.

It was a clear case of lobar

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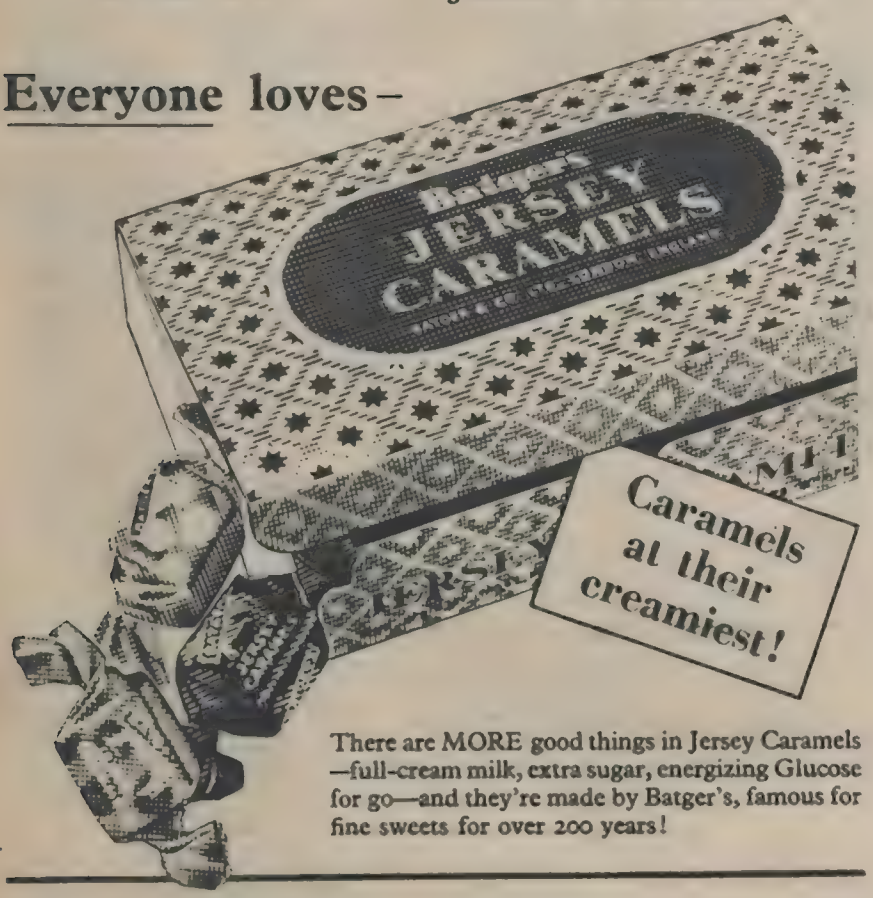

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pneumonia. Half an hour later, we were in an ambulance on our way to hospital, the prince wrapped snugly in blankets.

My official duties kept me extremely busy and I was not able to follow up my occasional patients as closely as I should have liked. The prince was in good hands, however, and I felt, therefore, that I could leave him to his fate.

He was certainly far from my thoughts when, one morning, I was confronted by the interpreter and the old man in the gold cloak. The old man informed me that the prince had recovered and would go home next day. He, the prince, begged that I would accompany him: I had brought him good fortune on the outward journey, and my company on the way home could not fail to have a beneficent influence. It was impossible to refuse such an invitation.

In a dilapidated Ford car, the prince and I set off for his residence. On our arrival, the palace courtyard was full of cheering people. Zealous bodyguards opened a path for us with kicks and blows in all directions. Deafened by the shrill cries of the women, we passed through the inner court, and into a room so long and narrow that I took it for a corridor.

Barefoot March Began

A magnificent Persian carpet was spread over the uneven floor tiles. Against the wall stood an eighteenth-century writing table of rosewood inlaid and ornamented with brass. On one wall was a long shelf filled with a strange assortment of books, clocks of all kinds, alabaster statuettes, saucerless cups without handles, a stuffed owl half eaten by moths, and images of Abyssinian saints. Near the door, Marlene Dietrich in a bathing costume exhibited her legs on the colourful cover of a French magazine which was stuck on the wall. A layer of dust threw a veil of melancholy over the whole scene.

The prince installed himself in an armchair and a march-past of his followers began. They were of all ages. Some were dressed in velvet or silk and gold; some were covered with rags. All went barefoot.

There appeared to be no order in the procession, nor any question of precedence. The only indication of rank, or degree of relationship to the prince, seemed to be the measure of the warmth of his greeting, and the expression—imperious, distant, condescending, affable or affectionate—with which he received the homage.

Some who prostrated themselves to kiss his foot failed to move a muscle of his face; but others were embraced even before they could bow before him. Two small boys who threw themselves at his feet were raised, placed on his knee and caressed with a tenderness so at variance with the prince's stern expression that they were obviously more scared than gratified. And one man of Herculean build burst into tears and cried like a child in his master's embrace.

When the ceremony was over and I was free to withdraw, I assumed that my relations with the prince would revert to those I maintained in my official capacity with all the other native chiefs. Little did I know how tenacious gratitude can be in a generous heart, and what unexpected forms it may assume.

Singers Roused Guests

A week later, I was invited to a banquet given by the prince to celebrate his recovery. It began at midday and took place in a pavilion behind the palace.

After three hours of it, some of the guests were on the point of falling asleep, overcome by the spring heat and by too much food and *tech*, the strong native beer.

To wake things up, a troupe of girl singers entered. They were dressed in fine white linen and they moved about from table to table, singing short verses in subdued voices.

I did not, of course, understand a word. From time to time, a guest threw a handful of coins to the girls, and would announce that he was giving such and such a sum in honour of the prince or of some other notability present at the feast. The singer, having pocketed the money, then placed herself in front of the person named, and improvised a few couplets in his honour. It was clear that the lines often made fun of some feature of the banquet, and the guests swayed with noisy laughter and made the plates bounce as they banged the tables with their hands.

At the head of one table was a merchant from Massawa whom I had at one time treated. He shouted over the heads of the other diners that he was offering twenty thalers [about £5] in my honour.

Girl Watched Furtively

As a special guest, I was seated on a small raised platform, at a separate table. Two servants were assigned to me and as soon as my plate was empty they refilled it with the dexterity of conjurers. I have always had an excellent appetite and I have a special weakness for *zighini*, the Abyssinian stew made with red pepper. I have no idea how many plates I had polished off on that occasion, but it must have been an imposing number.

When the merchant from Massawa called my name, my mouth was full and I was chewing with gusto. Suddenly I found the prince's interpreter at my side, and in front of me, a few paces away, a girl singer who watched me furtively and smiled. She was young and beautiful, tall and coffee-coloured with liquid eyes. For a few moments she remained silent, then she raised her head and sang. The interpreter translated the lines as the girl improvised them.

The beautiful singer declared herself to be terrified; she trembled from head to foot, her teeth chattered, she could hardly speak. For a moment she held her audience in suspense, tickling their curiosity, and then explained that she was terrified because she found herself face to face with a lion.

I assumed a modest air and smiled benignly. The girl covered her face with her hands and continued her song: she could see the lion—he was tall and large—and he looked at her with eyes of fire. I began to be embarrassed. Many eyes were fixed on me.

Yes, the girl insisted, she saw the lion, and she recognized him not because he roared, for in fact he smiled at her; not because he was ferocious, for in fact he was kindly. How did she recognize him? "I recognize you, *O ambessa* [lion], because you have been eating for four hours without a pause!"

Big Eaters Are Popular

The guests rose to their feet and yelled their approval. The prince smiled and waved to me. The Massawa merchant invoked God's blessing on me in Arabic. The interpreter mopped himself and offered congratulations. In primitive communities, the big eater is always a popular figure: a large appetite is taken as an indication of strength and inspires respect and admiration. At that moment, however, I would have been glad to disappear into the earth.

The next day, Jemberié announced that a man and woman were awaiting me in the drawing-room. It was the interpreter and the girl singer.

The jovial interpreter became eloquent. The prince, he said, loved me, for he owed his life to me: he thought of me continually, and was often sad when he spoke of my solitary life. He had been happy to see me laugh at the singer's improvisations. The girl was of noble family and I had

WHO'S WHO?

A D E G are the clues on page 43 which help to identify the woman on the left as Oona O'Neill, wife of Charles Chaplin and daughter of Eugene O'Neill.

B C F H are the clues which identify the woman on the right as Claire Bloom, stage and screen actress, and star of Chaplin's latest film, "Limelight."

TIME IS THE ART OF THE SWISS

Measuring a hair's breadth is his business

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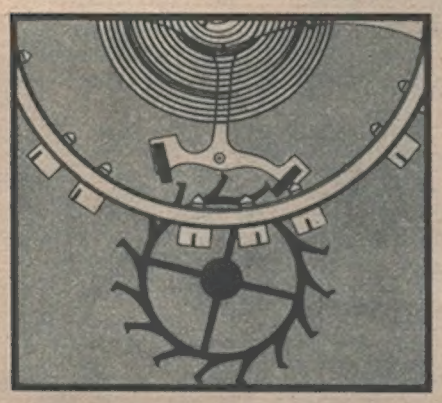

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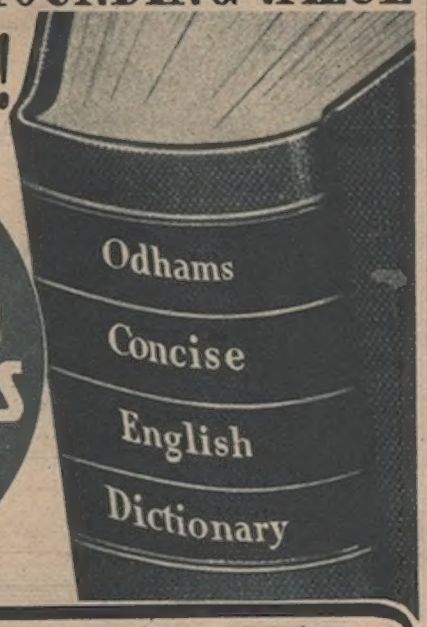

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OH, JOHNNY! — *by TIM*

myself praised her beauty and her singing. Very well, then—the prince begged me to keep her. When I was sad, she would smile at me; when I was tired she would sing for me; and when I was lonely, she would bear me company.

The small villa in which I then lived was part of an official residence, and this situation saved me. I feigned extreme disappointment as I explained that women were not allowed to live there. It was for this reason, I said, that my staff was all male. I expressed sincere regret at being thus obliged to refuse the prince's generous offer.

The interpreter was completely perplexed in the face of such an unexpected obstacle. But of course, if it was not permitted there was nothing to be done.

He hurried the singer out of the room, pushed her into the dilapidated Ford, and with a sigh of relief I watched them drive away.

New Arrival Had Tail

About three weeks of relative tranquillity followed—not taking into account, that is, the sporadic arrivals of monumental dishes of chicken, guinea fowl, bustard, goat and mutton swimming in fiery sauces, which were sent to me by the prince.

One day, towards two o'clock, the morning's work being done, I telephoned home. In answer to my inquiry, Jemberié replied in an unusually cheerful voice: "Little one come make laughing everybody."

Agitated and imagining that the prince had made me a present of a son, I asked if the "little one" was a child. Jemberié, laughing, said it was not and that it had a tail and sang. Relieved, I replaced the receiver. Evidently, I thought, it was a bird, perhaps a parrot.

When he opened the door to me, Jemberié was not alone. At his side, reaching no higher than his elbow, stood a hideous little monster making faces at me.

It was certainly not a child. Black, tough hairs grew out of its chin and upper lip, under a flat nose. It—he—was dressed all in green. At the back, his tunic reached to his buttocks and then stood out like the eaves of a roof; it was draped over a bunch of bulrushes which he wore like a tail. Waddling about on his short, crooked legs, the horrible little monster wagged this outgrowth from side to side and sang in a croaking voice that made my flesh creep.

He was the prince's jester. The letter which had come with him was categoric: the little monstrosity was to keep me company and cheer my solitude.

His name, I was informed, was Tellaé, which means: "My joy."

I sat down, all spirit gone out of me. My Joy turned cartwheels and somersaults all round the room. My resistance was broken: I had no alternative but to keep the creature, much to the prince's satisfaction. But although it was necessary to keep him, I was determined never to set eyes on him. I gave strict orders: he was to be treated well but he was not to be allowed in my quarters.

Unfortunately, the rumour spread that I had a jester, and whenever I had guests, they would ask to see him. So My Joy had to be sent for and would arrive wagging his ignoble hindquarters. He made faces at everyone, imitated the noise made by a hen laying an egg, climbed on the furniture, ran on all fours under the table, snapping at the legs of my guests, and performing any other devilish trick that occurred to him. The wife of an American engineer even begged me to let her have him. In return she offered me a refrigerator.

Unfortunately for me, some little while later, I had to render another small medical service to the prince. At this his gratitude became positively dangerous.

One evening as he served at table, Jemberié informed me that the little hunchback's sister was in the courtyard, having come to pass a couple of hours with her brother. My jaw fell and I sat with my fork in mid-air. In my mind I saw my house transformed into a shelter for a whole family of monsters.

But Tellaé's sister was not deformed: she was tall and beautifully built, and she smiled at me timidly, as though excusing herself for the subterfuge her master had forced her to adopt. I recognized her at once: she was the girl who had served as a bolster for the prince when he was ill.

Showered With Thanks

It was the last attempt. A month later, I was recalled to Italy. The prince was among the group of friends who gathered to bid me farewell. As he strained me to his heart in a suffocating embrace, his hunchback jumped round us wagging his tail, and the interpreter, almost completely dissolved in perspiration, gabbled panting interpretations of the blessings and good wishes and salutations and thanks which the prince showered upon me.

I never saw my fantastic patient again, but I have not forgotten him. With his glowering, unprepossessing countenance that could nevertheless smile so graciously, he was not a type to be easily forgotten. Though he plagued and tormented me, I bear him no grudge. In my life as a doctor in Africa, he occupies a place apart: the barbaric prince of a fabulous country in which I once lived. THE END

"A Cure For Serpents," by Alberto Denti, will be published in May as a book by André Deutsch Ltd., at 16s.

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Man, The Gardener	Worth More
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Dentist Butler	Model Railway
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Stalin, Malenkov, Bulganin	Looks Can Lie, So
Always Fighting	Dictator Baby
In Love's Fairyland	Tired But Happy
Must Be The Spring	Horrified Silence
Black Monday	At The Prison Concert

Incomplete "Examples"—see instructions

.....Of The World	The Price Of.....
The ..... Business	Way To Run A.....
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RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to John Bull, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate in *Bullets* for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in *"Bullets" Bulletin* dated April 2 and in John Bull dated April 9), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, March 26, for early news of *Bullets* No. 1,978 result.)

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